

# AINSLIEE'S

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## THE INN OF THE LONG YEAR

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### CHAPTER I.

"HOW much farther?" asked Hilliard. He stopped in the drizzling rain, and looked at his surroundings without pleasure. He had meant there should be a spirit of adventure in this thing; and there was nothing but wet clothes and a grinding weariness. There had been times when he had loved the woods, but that was when he had gone to them for pleasure, not refuge. He was tired, body and soul, and it showed in his voice as he called again to the Indian in front of him: "How much farther?"

"Most there," returned the man. He eased the thongs of the load he carried, and incidentally inspected the white man Macdonald had sent him out with. "You sick?" he asked, slowly.

"No!" said Hilliard. His head ached rackingly, but he was not thinking about it; he could almost have laughed as he realized what he was thinking about. "I want to get on, that's all." But he did not move.

A month ago, for a man who was an orphan, inheriting a controlling interest in the R. I. M. Co., life had presented opportunities. Mr. James Wayne Hil-

liard had improved them all. His yacht, his polo ponies, and his *fiancée*, Mrs. Barrington, were all the smartest of the smart. Jimmy Hilliard took them all as a happy matter of course, and butterflied through life with great zest and variety, leaving the affairs of the R. I. M. Co. to the directors, because he did not understand business. He had no relations to please, because he was an only son, who had learned before his mother's death that he lived with her because she and his father had never got on; and when the latter died, also, at what his lawyers delicately termed "his shooting box," it affected him very slightly. His father had been only a name, and not an honored one. He had been a well-educated, shiftless person, given to prospecting for minerals in unearthly places, and to living in the wilderness before a strenuous life was the fashion; his having had so large an interest in the R. I. M. Co. was both a surprise and an accident.

Jimmy Hilliard was astonished, when he came of age, to find what an amount he had fallen heir to; by the time he met Mrs. Barrington he had cheerfully ceased to think about it at all. He was occupying himself chiefly with the prep-

arations for his wedding when there arrived a certain Friday morning, which must have been years ago, because he remembered it very clearly, like an old man. It was Monday night when he ran down to Newport to see Zélie Barrington, caring very little for certain things that had happened to the R. I. M. Co., because he knew Zélie cared for him, not his money. He had longed all Sunday for the one look from her which would tell him nothing mattered, since he had kept his word—and on the very threshold of her drawing room he was aware of her eyes. He looked square at her, and saw what was coming. And it certainly came.

Half an hour afterwards the Mr. Hilliard, who had been called Handsome Jimmy, R. I. M. Co. Hilliard, and the *fiancé* of the *chic* Mrs. Barrington, walked out of her house none of the three. He was not good-looking, because his paleness went to the bone; the R. I. M. Co. had fallen to pieces over his head; and the lady to whom he was to have been married had disabused him of any such idea. He had had half a hundred plans in his head when he went to her; when he left her the only thing that occurred to him was that he had a house and some woods somewhere that would be a quiet place to go to; there was something the matter with him that did not come from the turmoil in the R. I. M. Co.'s offices. The sentence that kept ringing in his mind was Zélie's answer when he told her he was completely broke.

"You can't be!" He could see the look she had given him. "Tom Standish says that though you've been culpably negligent you're all right this minute, unless you've made up your mind to be idiotically quixotic.

He had not made up his mind to it because he had already done it; she was perfectly right when she said he had been culpable. All he answered was something stumbling about the common stockholders—"it was all small holdings"—it was not possible to explain. But when she shrugged her shoulders it dawned on him that it was time to go, because he was never coming back

any more; and that the only place to go to was the bit of wilderness his father had left him, too worthless to be swallowed up in the R. I. M. Co. gulf. There were a few farewells he might decently have said, but he did not remember about them; things after that had been more or less of a dream, out of which he had waked to find himself standing in the woods in the pouring rain, asking questions of an Indian.

He looked suddenly and considerably at the tangled wilderness around him. There was no sign of a path, and the jumble of trees and brush and high bracken was chiefly a screen for big rocks that had to be gone round, and little ones that turned and let his feet through into holes full of warm water. It was not precisely the cheerful business he had imagined it when the idea of returning to his father's old house had seemed to him the greatest godsend in the world. He straightened his back under the load of provisions that had seemed so light when he left Macdonald's, and tried to think his legs were not trembling as he stepped out once more after his guide. Macdonald's had seemed the dropping-off place when he arrived there in an ox cart the night before, and now it and its outlying squalor seemed a center of civilization.

It occurred to Mr. Hilliard sharply that he had been all kinds of a fool not to have stayed in New York and gone into some fellow's office—and then he grinned—crookedly, but still he grinned. There was not one office that would have taken the man who had let the R. I. M. Co. be muddled to pieces, unless some of them took him out of charity; and there was also—the grin was gone—Zélie, and her "culpable negligence"! The woods, after all, were best. But he wished with some pungency that it had occurred to him in the days of his prosperity to inspect, and make a road to the house his father had built in the wilderness.

"Just one of the thousands I wasted would have done the whole thing, and saved twenty years' wear off my only legs!" he muttered, slipping down into unknown crevices between rocks and

scrambling out again, while the rain kept on raining, and little trickles of cold water went exploring down his back. He was angrily aware that his Indian guide was walking with exactly the same step as he had started with, and that he, Jimmy Hilliard, was going lame. He kept on, as people keep on in a nightmare, and the thought that kindly accompanied him was that a month ago he had been R. I. M. Co. Hilliard, who was engaged to the pretty Mrs. Barrington; and now he was old man Hilliard's son, getting along to the only place under heaven he could call his own—and Zélie was done with him!

In a sudden agonizing loneliness he called out a question to his Indian, and was thankful for the answer because it was the kindly speech of a human being.

"This hard work!" said the man. "We think p'r'aps best make camp now. It most dark." He was a curiously high-class old Indian to have been hanging round Macdonald's, and he had taken one of an Indian's inexplicable fancies to Jimmy Hilliard.

"Camp!" Hilliard glared at the dripping bushes, and then at his own drenched legs. "Lord, no!" said he, devoutly. "Let's get on. At any rate, there's a roof."

"We think so." The queer inflection was wasted on a man who was not used to Indian speech. "P'r'aps best we go on. Most to lake now."

"Lake! But—" Hilliard leaned against a bowlder, too tired to be annoyed. "I didn't know there was a lake," he said, weakly. "We haven't got any boat for it, and I don't see how we're to swim."

"We don't need boat," returned the man, enigmatically. "But we say best stop here till morning; very bad place after dark."

It was Mr. Hilliard's opinion that no place could be worse than the swampy one where he now stood in the queer, stifling sweetness that was steaming out of the ground. The rain had stopped, and the air was like a greenhouse.

"I'd rather go on," he said; and there was that in his voice that made the In-

dian nod. This man was possessed, and it was not good to be alone with him.

It was well after dark when Hilliard was aware of a cool, damp freshness, as of open spaces, and then of a solemn expanse of white mist, hanging unbroken to the height of a man's head over what must be the lake, because his feet were crunching on a pebbly shore. It was the dark of the moon, and in all the limitless blackness of the sky there was not a star; the mist seemed to be all the light there was. He saw it white, like fallen snow, and as impervious.

"Do you mean the house is across there?" his voice sounded flat in the stillness, yet it seemed to him he heard it carry, and carry, and carry out across the ghostly lake.

"Over there—the house." The Indian turned a little, pointing to the north. And Jimmy Hilliard jumped.

Above the blanketing mist, making a blood-red pathway across some hundred yards of it, shone a light. It was red and round, and very steady, like a burned down fire; and there was no reason for him to speak in a sudden, sick whisper.

"There's a light. Someone lives—" he meant to say, "in my house," with the injury of a landowner who drops on squatters, but the words came out differently. "There's someone there," he said.

In the dimness the Indian peered at him; before he answered:

"No one there. Him Hilliard's light."

"Hilliard's light." After the first dumfounded echo mirthless laughter seized the owner of the name; he stood and giggled and shook till something that was tangible pulled him up with a jerk. The Indian was speaking in slow sentences that cut the mist in his tired brain as that blood-colored light cut a path over the water.

"No one live there; no one go there. Old man Hilliard our frien'—he say: 'Don' you let no one live in this house, this my son's house.' And old man Hilliard he die there. No priest, no nothing; we tell you that lonely! Not a one soul; not a one cat. And bimbehy

no one come, so we come; we tell priest and we bury him. Then we go because he say no one live there—an' when we look back one night we see that light; always and always that light. So bimeby the people afraid. They say that place no good. Then why you wait to-day; Macdonald not go, Indian boy not go; bimeby they find me. But all the way you good man to me, so we say we tell you. That place no good for you; don' you go! He burn, that light, for old man Hilliard's son."

"But," said Jimmy, simply, "that's me! I'm his son." He stood and stared at the light that no one lit or tended with a despairing feeling that all his life was a dream, and one more queer thing could not possibly matter. "How'm I going to get across the lake?" he asked, as if a ghost light and a haunted place where no one ever went were Union Square. "You see, that's all the house I've got."

The Indian said something in an unknown language; perhaps it meant belief, and perhaps not, but it was plain he was going no farther; it is not wise to trust too much to the friendship of dead men. He took the load from his shoulders and *cached* it carefully before he spoke in English.

"We stay here," he said to Jimmy Hilliard, shivering in his wet clothes within sight of his own house. "We cross lake on stepping-stones next morning."

"I'm going now," returned Hilliard, bluntly. "I suppose whatever sort of light that is, it's by my house! What d'ye mean by stepping-stones?"

The Indian shrugged his shoulders, stepped a pace or two into the mist, and lit a match. Jimmy Hilliard saw his path with the quick vision that comes to rage and despair, marked how the light lay to him, and started.

In after times he grew used to his pathway; but to-night he only knew he got over it because neither man, nor ghost, nor devil should keep him, in his wet clothes, out of the only house he had in the world. He got from one rock to the next as they showed dim black bulks through the mist; sometimes he

scrambled, and sometimes he crawled, and always his heart seemed bursting in him. By the time he had grown used to slipping and falling he had grown used to cutting his hands, and all he cared about was that the blood made them slippery as, yard by yard, he drew nearer to the incredible light that lay across the mist. The place would have been easy enough in daylight, and to a man in good condition, but Hilliard was pretty well done. He was aware that he came to dry land by narrowly escaping a fall into black water, and then the whole thing suddenly ceased to interest him. It was not for half an hour that he had sense to fumble for a match, and tear his way up an overgrown path to a tumble-down cabin that yawned open-doored before him. He struck the match; saw that the place was empty, and went in. He did not give one thought to the red glow that had guided him to his very door, because all he cared about was to drag off his wet clothes and roll himself in a dry blanket, drunk with sleep and weariness. But the Indian on the other side of the lake started.

He had only seen what he expected to see, but he started. The red light was out.

He wriggled a way through the dripping bushes, and made camp in a retired place, because there was that on the other side of the lake that knew its son.

But in the morning the dogged Indian faithfulness that goes down from one generation to another sent him off on a long, and probably thankless, trudge to Gillespie, the great man of the lonely district; he had not been satisfied with the home-coming of old man Hilliard's son. And at Gillespie's there was no one at home but a girl.

## CHAPTER II.

It was afternoon of the next day when Jimmy Hilliard went to the door of his residence to look out on the world.

In front of him was a long lake; at his



right hand there crossed it the curious natural causeway that had written its name on his hands and knees, but to the left it lay clear till it went out of sight behind a headland. The lap, lap of its little waves against the shore pleased him; he stood for five minutes trying to put their sound into an exact word and could not find one. But if the water was good, the land was better. As far as he could see was wilderness, ripening to autumn, and as he stood there came to him the wind off the swamplands, which is like no other wind on God's earth. He wondered suddenly if last night's magic lantern show could have been imagination.

"It doesn't matter; I like it!" he said, aloud. His sleep had been all dreams, haunted by the Indian's speech about his father who had died here—"I tell you that lonely;" by stinging self-reproach about the man he had neither known nor cared for; but it was gone now. There was that in the wilderness which was not lonely; it was a better place for a man to go out in than a close room in a careless town. There was something here that his quick blood answered to; a pagan joy, a forgetfulness. He drank the sweet wind in a long breath and laughed.

If he were going to live here, he would better get at his house a little; he would get some sort of a man somewhere, if ever he could find his way back to Macdonald's, but for now—

With a cheerful whistle and rolled up shirt sleeves, Mr. Hilliard, the late ornament of ballrooms and the most exclusive clubs, betook himself to cleaning out his house with a tin of cold water, some twigs, and a piece most unwisely torn off his blanket. The great desire of his soul, as at length he stood and surveyed his labors, was for some stove blacking. The stove, which had apparently been here from time immemorial, and trembled at a touch, might at least look useful if he could only make it shine. But the aspect of the rest of the house filled him with unbounded pride, mingled with a haunting doubt as to the possibility of getting rid of certain pools of water that adorned the

floor. He went gingerly down on his knees, and swabbed at them; it was slow work, and enthralling; and if there was a slight sound behind him he did not notice it. The thing that made him leap to his feet was a deliberate knock at his open door.

"Heavens to Betsy!" he thought, helplessly; it was an expression heard at Macdonald's, and it had taken his erratic fancy. A girl—a real live girl!—was standing on his threshold!

Jimmy Hilliard, who had been a mirror of fashion in the prehistoric days of three weeks ago, stood speechlessly conscious of his scrubbing cloth, his warm and disreputable appearance. For the girl was a girl, slim and easy in brown corduroys. She had no hat on, and her sunburned bronze hair was full of gold streaks over a face tanned like an apricot. He was sharply aware that her eyes were as blue as the lake behind her; and of something more. She was looking at him with absolute, frightened blankness.

"I came," she said, "I came—" she looked from his face to the place before her, and could get no further. The cabin was an ordinary log cabin, with two built-in bunks, a shelf table, and the rickety stove for furniture; and the luxurious effects of the occupant, piled helter-skelter on the only dry island of floor, were as incongruous as the occupant himself. He stood tall, hot and dumfounded before her, with his sleeves rolled to his shoulders, his dark hair streaked over his forehead, and a large splash of dirty water under one of his gray eyes; and, even so, she knew him. That was the hateful, awful part of it. She knew him!

Half a hundred things rushed back on her; humiliations, gossip, Aunt Clara's maneuvers, and that speech overheard in the Pomeroy's conservatory beginning with "Hilliard said." What Hilliard said had been enough to make her drag Aunt Clara off to Florida in the very middle of the season, and cause her to hate that astute lady ever since. And here she was, doing for herself what she had used plain language and rebellion to her aunt about. She stood staring at

him, wondering desperately how she was ever to explain. If it had not been so plainly idiotic she would have thought she smelt the heavy scent of the conservatory where she had overheard what "Hilliard said"; where she had sat alone, crushed with remembering what she had said to Hilliard. And that took the last hope of coherent speech from her.

It had all been so simple and so ghastly, for a girl who had no better guardian than Aunt Clara Vyse in a world that had no welcome for her. Pauline Gillespie was anything but a success in society, and was learning it when Jimmy Hilliard appeared on her horizon. She lived to see him, egged on by Mrs. Vyse, till the miserable night when she misunderstood him in the Pomeroy's conservatory, and began to talk and sob against his shoulder. She remembered every word of the deadly kind ones he had used to answer her; and if they were kind they were plain. She was too good to him; and only seventeen; and so on! And it was when he went to get some iced cup for her and incidentally give her time, that Aunt Clara had fallen on him, before people, and demanded his intentions. There had been an inrush of awestruck and giggling couples after that, and from behind her came plainly what Hilliard had said to Aunt Clara Vyse. If only he had forgotten! But there could be no hope of that—and her head went up suddenly. She would brave it out. It was the only way.

Hilliard stood waiting stupidly. He had pulled himself together enough not to demand of the girl where on earth she had come from, but the silence was getting too tangible.

"I beg a thousand pardons for the mess," he began, "I——"

"Mr. Hilliard," said Pauline Gillespie; her cheeks flooded scarlet, and it was his turn to stand astounded; there was something oddly familiar in her voice, but he had never laid eyes on her in his life. "Mr. Hilliard. No, don't try to remember me! I'd rather you didn't—I mean you couldn't possibly." The scarlet that had gone down came

up again. "I—I've only seen you in New York; but of course I couldn't help knowing you." And then it occurred to her that the best thing to do was to laugh; besides, it was a relief. "You won't be angry, will you, but it's—rather funny. An Indian from Macdonald's came to our house this morning and said he had brought old man Hilliard's son out here and left him, and was afraid he was ill. I—I thought—well, I never thought of anybody like you! So I've brought some things, soup, you know, and——" she really could not own to the old clothes, and it made her flounder. "I'd always heard this was Hilliard's, just as the place you came in at is Macdonald's; I had no idea it belonged to you. I'm used to looking after the men out here if they're ill. I'm——" she paused the fraction of a second. She would not drag in Pauline Gillespie; there was another name, that only Frank called her, that would recall nothing. "I'm Saint, Frank Gillespie's half sister," she finished in a hurry, "and Frank's away."

"What?" said Hilliard. This could not possibly be the long-legged Gillespie girl old Clara Vyse used to hawk about and throw at fellows' heads till it would have been ludicrous—if the girl had not looked so miserable. He remembered legging it himself one night at the Pomeroy's, when the old lady was unbearable. But that was nonsense. He had a dim memory of a shy, rather stupid girl, too slight and slim for her reddish hair and big eyes, nothing in the least like the one who stood now in his doorway. "If I'd ever seen you with him I should remember you," he said, gravely, deferentially.

Miss Gillespie drew a sharp breath. She was suddenly comfortable for the first time since she had met his eyes. She had always known they were nice eyes, but it was the beautiful unconsciousness in them now which put an invigorating courage into her.

"I should have seen old Andrew myself, instead of taking his news from one of our men," she remarked, in a matter-of-fact tone, "then I should not have bothered you."

"It was tremendously good of you to bother!" said Hilliard; and if he had remembered, it was.

"It was no trouble," carelessly. "Our camp is just across the lake from you."

"You don't mean I'm near Gillespie's?" with impolite blankness. For Gillespie was a well-known man in his way, and his house in the wilderness famous.

"We won't bother you," said Miss Gillespie, stiffly. "We're miles away from you for one thing, and for another, there's no one there now but me. Frank's still in Newport. And, of course, even if the house were full, no one would interfere with your fishing or your party. I came over because I thought you—somebody was ill."

"My party's me," rather dryly, "and as for your coming—" He stopped and glanced at her with a new sort of interest. She was immensely good-looking, but besides that there was a sort of soft independence about her, not worn by the girls he knew. Good heavens, they would no more have come to help a strange man in the woods than have gone into the tiger's cage at a circus, and it struck him that for all this girl had known about her expedition it might not have been much safer. "You didn't come alone?" he suggested, involuntarily.

"No," she stood in the doorway, quite unconscious, "I've a man in the canoe to carry the things for the invalid"—she laughed, really this time—"I was going to find here." She could never like him, of course, but since he had forgotten her and Aunt Clara she meant to be as perfectly oblivious as he was. She was even prettier than Hilliard had thought her as she suddenly put both hands behind her back, and hunched her shoulders consideringly. "Did you wash out those bunks as you did the floor?" she inquired, with detached philanthropy.

"Isn't it right?" with crestfallen annoyance.

"It's a lake! Why didn't you make that old goose Andrew stay and clear up for you?"

"He wouldn't," shortly. He hoped

she was not going to begin about Hilliard's light; he had no desire to be the mystery of the countryside.

But she only nodded.

"He's a queer old man," she assented, as casually as if she knew nothing, and had not brought her own Indian here by scorn and sneers.

It was a relief. But Jimmy Hilliard could not help laughing at his own squeamishness, and there was something good in his smile that even a girl of nineteen who had spent most of her time with Mrs. Vyse knew for what it was. If she had an intense curiosity as to what Hilliard could be doing in a haunted wilderness without the barest necessities of life, and with silver-mounted dressing things thrown in a heap on the floor with fishing rods and a rifle, she did not say so. Other people's business was their own.

"You'll get your death of cold if you don't get this place dry," she observed practically. "If you'll take those things outside, and pick the cartridges out of the tea, I'll help you before I go."

"What?" The proprietor looked with disgust on his tin of dirty water. "Indeed you won't! You'll tell me what to do, and I'll do it. You are not going to put your hands in this mess."

"It seems to me I'm telling you, and you're *not* doing it!" she returned, rather dryly. "As for my hands—" she held out hard palms with a shrug. "Will you please go down to the shore, and tell my Indian I want him—and give me that cloth?"

"I may be an idiot, but I'm not a wicked idiot," said her host, wrathfully. He plumped down on his knees, and sopped and squeezed at his pools of water—and his cut hands told a tale to the girl who watched him. She turned and called from the open door.

"Denny!" And what furthermore she said in a strange tongue he grew hot to think of when he knew her better, but her Indian certainly obeyed her to the letter.

It was a different interior in no time. The floor was dry in the sun that streamed in the cleared window, the best bunk was filled with hemlock

boughs, green and sweet and small, the six square feet of space that remained after allowing for the stove had neatly bestowed in it all the properties that would not go into the spare bunk; and Miss Gillespie was surveying it with approval.

"The stove wants a piece of sheet iron," she said, impersonally, just as if at their last meeting she had not sobbed, unasked, in his arms, "but you don't need it this weather. I think you'll be all right now."

"If I am it's thanks to you!" said Hilliard, foolishly. "If anyone ever was an angel to a man who didn't deserve it, you've been one. I—I feel a beast for letting you do it, after—" He only meant to say, "after your long paddle," but he paused, clumsily, disastrously.

The girl went white to the roots of her hair. He had been pretending; he remembered! She stood helpless; sick. Hilliard, more boyishly touched by her solid kindness than he knew how to say, floundered into deeper water.

"I hope you'll let me come to see you, since you're good enough to say you remember me?" he asked. Shyness made his voice almost mocking, and it seemed too egregious to be stupid, and also a hint to go—though that was the last thing in his head.

Saint Gillespie lifted her face that the color would not come back to.

"Oh, certainly," she said, "Frank—will be very glad! I'm usually—out." The meaning was unmistakable.

Before he knew it she had nodded brusquely and was gone.

### CHAPTER III.

"Well, I'm—blessed!" gasped Hilliard. "That was sudden." He looked with injury at a flying canoe and gleaming hair with the sun on it. "What on earth did I say?"

He stood halfway to the shore, which had been as far as he could get before he realized that Miss Gillespie had fled to her canoe without waiting for him, and grubbed in the past for details. The

only Gillespie girl who could remember him had been old Clara Vyse's niece, but this could never be her. And yet he had a cloudy idea she was Frank Gillespie's sister.

"Well, the Lord knows, I don't!" he thought, resignedly; and then something took his eye. She had dropped her handkerchief in that scuttle as from pirates, and as he picked it up the name on it unlocked the wheels of his memory.

"Pauline Gillespie."

"You beast!" he said, heartily, to his guilty soul. "Of course. But no one would ever know her." He remembered now; had remembered her voice from the very first—and he had no more sense than to practically tell the poor child so—for of course that was what she had thought he meant with his "after." He remembered miserably that he had seen her make a frightful effort when first she recognized him, and Heaven knew she had reason enough. Most girls would have said a word or two, and legged it; but this one had faced it out. Jimmy Hilliard turned in abject dejection and sought his house. He had already no desire for anything but kicking himself, and the house was a fresh blow.

It had been a comfortless, miserable hole; now it was a homelike place, and a clean one. She had remembered first—and done all this for him afterwards, quite easily, like a stranger; and she must have thought in the end he had felt her kindness all of a piece with the Pomeroy's conservatory.

"Good powers," growled Hilliard, "she must have thought me a clear brute, instead of a plain idiot! It would have been a thousand times better if I'd remembered her, but the only decent thing I can do now is to go down and see her and tell her some lie. Of course, we were all perfectly beastly to her that year; she couldn't have thought we liked her." He had a dim memory of the Gillespie girl sitting out alone and neglected because most of the men had a wholesome and experienced terror of Mrs. Vyse; and then a horrible recollection of the priggish, superior,

copybook sentiments he had fired at a girl of seventeen who had broken down and cried because no one liked her. "I'll go down to-morrow," he decided, hastily. "I can't wonder she didn't seem very keen about it. And goodness knows what I'm to say."

It was odd, but ever since he had been in the old cabin he had never thought of Zélie or his own ruin; he was not thinking of them now as he flung out the door restlessly. There was a pail of soup outside, and a parcel of fresh meat; she had left the things!

For a moment he was angry; and then he was grateful. He needed them; he was poorer than a mouse. If ever a girl had returned good for evil she had, and he wanted—badly—to clear off the debt. He would go down the very next day. And then it dawned on him that he had no boat; nothing but his own legs and the very haziest idea of where she had gone.

"I believe," he said, slowly, and he was annoyed, "she must have felt perfectly secure I couldn't do it. But I'll go if I swim." There was a look on his face that had never been there when he was R. I. M. Co. Hilliard; it was worth while to be determined to repair a rudeness to a woman, and he had a long score to repair to Miss Gillespie. "And she's a nice girl, but she's anything but the child she used to be! How I'm ever to make up any lie she can believe beats me." He reached back blankly for his pipe he had laid on the doorsill, and something caught his eye as he turned. Nailed over the door was an inscription written with a paint brush on a shingle. The old letters were nearly as gray as the weatherworn wood, but he made them out; and they gave him a pang.

"The Inn of the Long Year," he spelt out slowly. It must have been a long year indeed for the man who had lived his life here, leaving his money and his place in the world to a wife and son who had never loved him, or even been grateful. Hilliard's mother had been an outspoken woman; but he had never thought till now that there might have been two sides to her story. The Inn

of the Long Year looked like it. Only a lonely man would have thought of that! And an hour ago his son had been ashamed of the superstition that had, at least, kept off squatters and left him a roof he could call his own. He got up abruptly and went for a walk.

When he came back it was pitch dark, and the look on his face was hidden. He had found out some queer things about the red glow the Indian had called Hilliard's light, and whether they changed his superstitious thought of it he did not know. It was certainly a tangible thing, if not an approachable one; and as certainly had answered the purpose for which it was meant. For he was sure it had been meant; and he flushed darkly as he wondered how his father had known he would turn out a worthless idiot, who would need a refuge kept for him. As he lit his own cooking fire he sniffed thoughtfully at the queer scent that arose from his tweed coat sleeve, and abruptly retired out of the way of sparks. But after he had eaten Miss Gillespie's soup it was not the incandescent glow outside that he mused on, but other explorations of his surroundings.

His lake turned, at the end where Miss Gillespie had gone, to a long, winding stillwater, and down the opposite shore of it lay her camp. If he went by his own shore it was all of five miles, and he was on the wrong side of the lake when he got there; but the stepping-stone bridge that had nearly drowned him last night was a different thing to-day. That, and a cross-country angle, had taken him easily within sight of her tents and the bungalow Gillespie called a shack. For a man raw to the woods he was curiously at home in them till he turned in the dusk to go back to his own cabin and saw it from the top of the first hill, dark against a faint red glow that seemed to change and spread even while he looked at it. He had made time getting to it, and found—he did not know what he had found. But as he lay down at last in his hemlock bed it dawned on him that there might be more to the Inn of the Long Year than loneliness.

## CHAPTER IV.

Miss Gillespie was out; thoroughly and effectually out. Judging from the past, she had no idea that Hilliard would exert himself to call upon her, but all the same she was out. It was a heavenly day for the lake shore and the canoe, but she avoided both of them and retired inland, to the woods. She sat in the shade with her lap full of huckleberry stalks thick with berries and an open book in her hand; but she was neither reading nor eating. It was simply too much that Hilliard should be out here—Hilliard. And as she thought it she looked up, and saw him arriving by that back way of his own invention.

If there had been time to run—but he was straight on her! And as she jumped up, startled, he saw she was taller than he had thought, and that he was going to have his work cut out to be on any terms with her. All his carefully arranged lies went clean out of his head. He looked full at her; and she was horribly aware how handsome he was and of the precise color of his eyes. His eyelashes were as long and even as a deer's; and she would not, could not, look at the sudden sweetness of his mouth as he pulled off his cap. She had to give him her hand, but it was without any welcome whatever.

"Frank came home last night," she said, smoothly. "If you follow that path to the house you will find him."

"I will," said Hilliard, slowly, with inspiration, "when I've made a clean breast of something to you. Did you ever hear of Hilliard's light?"

"Hilliard's light?" It was the last thing she expected.

He nodded.

"I see you have; but I hadn't, till I saw it the night I came. I was trying to make up my mind to ask you about it yesterday, but you'd gone while I was thinking about it, before I'd half thanked you."

"Oh, not at all," murmured Miss Gillespie, vaguely. If he had tried for a hundred years to make her think he did not know her he could not have done better than to begin on that light.

"I hadn't," obstinately. "And if I wasn't a tramp, and ill, the things you did for me made all the difference. But I had the most idiotic feeling you might say something about the light, and I—didn't want you to. Do you mind if I tell you something? It's about my father."

Something in the voice took the hard look from her eyes.

"Yes." She waited.

When the Indian's story was out, stumbingly, he looked at her. "I don't know what it is," he said, frankly, "but I think it means something, that it doesn't burn for nothing; that perhaps it's going to give me a chance again. You know I made a fool of myself in New York, and came a cropper. That was another thing that jarred me yesterday, when you knew me. I almost said I'd come out here to be forgotten. And after you'd gone I realized what a brute I'd been, and what you must think of me. For, of course, you couldn't understand."

"I didn't think at all." She did not look at him, but, all the same, he knew there was relief on her face. "I'd made such a mess of the whole thing by coming, and I was afraid you were annoyed."

"It was I who made a mess of things," he replied, promptly. "So I had to come straight over here to explain. You don't think I'm a lunatic?"

"I've seen the light," she said, simply; but there was a difference already in her voice. "I know what you mean about it." And she did. It was a tie between the living and the dead and forgotten. "But yesterday—"

"You wished you hadn't come," he said, calmly. "If you hadn't I should have been dead from discomfort, let alone loneliness. I don't believe anyone ever was so good to a stranger before!"

He spoke without afterthought, and she looked at him.

"Do you really forget me?" she asked, sharply.

Under her wide, unflinching eyes Jimmy Hilliard told the truth—and then prevaricated, as every man does to every woman in time of stress.



"I don't forget you at all!" And he did not. "I simply never saw anyone in the least like you," for the pale Gillespie girl of two years ago would never have looked at him with the eyes and air of this one, "and I certainly never even heard of anybody," smiling because he was thankful to get to plain truth again, "who was called 'Saint.'"

"I don't believe you did," she said, slowly, with an odd inflection, elusive, ungirlish. She was glad, of course, that he did not remember her, and yet—"I'm thankful," she said to herself, crossly, "and that's the end of it!" It was absurd to be angry because he had mercifully forgotten what a fool she had made of herself about him, egged on by Aunt Clara. She stood a minute in silence. He had changed. His face was worn, older, harder—and more good-looking even than she remembered it. He was more like Sir Thomas Malory's Lancelot than ever—and she cast a guilty glance at the book at her feet. He had said something had happened to him, but she would have known now without telling; she was shrewd enough since he had forgotten her. "Well," she thought, "I'm glad!" But she was not. She had once given him all the heart she had, but she had been sure her hard awakening had turned all that to hatred; sensible, thorough hatred. Now, of course, it was indifference.

"Suppose we go and find Frank!" she suggested; she had been alone with him long enough.

Hilliard stooped for the book on the ground, and her fine composure vanished.

"Old Malory!" he exclaimed. "I didn't think anyone ever read him but me. Don't you like his Lancelot?" For the book had a mark in it.

"No," said Saint, curtly.

"Oh, please do!" with his good smile, for if he should have had a guilty conscience he had not; no one but a brute could have dragged old skeletons out of their locked cupboards. "I never could stand Tennyson's. He was such a cad to Elaine."

"She deserved it," she said, coolly.

"Besides, I never believed in her! Really, she would have got over it, and fallen in love with somebody better." And her eyes were not the soft blue he had thought them.

"I believe she would," said Hilliard, rather dashed; he had good reason to know women usually forgot. He followed her along a rough track in silence, watching her move easily like a creature of the woods, with the low sun in her red gold hair that he had once despised. He made up his mind that somehow or other he would make a friend of her. And as he thought it they came in sight of Frank Gillespie, stout, good-humored, and idle, under a tree. Saint hailed him, and Hilliard jerked up with annoyance.

His guide was far too much like a creature of the woods. As her brother arrived full of welcomes and surprise and real pleasure at the extraordinary advent of Jimmy Hilliard, she had stepped aside into the bushes, and was gone.

"Hum!" said Mr. Hilliard. He had meant to make his peace with her and be gone; Gillespie's luxurious shack, and his cocktails and his servants did not appeal to a man who must catch fish if he wanted a better dinner than bacon; and there were other reasons besides. But when Gillespie asked him to dine, he stayed.

## CHAPTER V.

Saint Gillespie sat by a fire built in the open, and realized she was utterly and perfectly happy.

It was a queer place she looked on, and a lonely one, but it had always been her idea of Paradise, with enough of danger and the devil thrown in to make it interesting. All around her were high rocks, porcupine-haunted, fern-grown; between them pine trees tall and solemn in the sunset, with little gullies and paths here and there that led out to labyrinths, more of them, and more open country where the maples were already turning scarlet. Out there it was full of sudden low places, full of strange

flowers in the summer; cut by still waters where the moose came to eat the lily pads; no human foot came within miles of it except in winter, and it was not frequented then. People had been lost there too often. It had a queer name, Indian Gardens; and she wondered why as she looked down the nearest passage between the rocks to see if Frank and Hilliard were coming. And she did it without a thought of the old grudge. She had forgotten she had ever avoided Hilliard, or wanted to avoid him.

Out in the woods friendships are like ripening pigeon berries, quick and evident. Gillespie and Hilliard had taken to each other, and Saint had long ago ceased to be anything but at her ease with him, which was just as well, for Gillespie had carried him off with them to hunt for a week in Indian Gardens; and even before that, half the time the Inn of the Long Year stood empty.

Its owner had forgotten he had ever come out there to forget. In the days that came, new to him, the solemn nights that were dark and sweet, he had grown peacefully and absurdly happy. He knew that by and by he would wake and remember he must get back to the world, and the delightful effort of making a respectable, approved-of living, but for now he was a bit of the heart of the woods. If there were times in the dawning when the loons cried him awake to remember that he was all sorts of a failure and had only escaped dishonesty by the skin of his teeth, he did not encourage them. He had done the best he could and he had no more desire to be reminded of his old life than Saint had. He had been standing at the door of his tent watching her, and suddenly she turned and saw him.

"I didn't know you were back! Where's Frank?"

"Cutting up moose." He sat down beside her and drank the sweet scent of the broken bracken and the keen tang of wood smoke that came from the outlying edges of her fire. "What on earth are you cooking for? Why didn't you call me?" he asked with injury.

"Denny's with Frank; and I wanted

my dinner." She turned her attention to some moose meat on the end of a long stick, and laughed as he took it from her.

"You're too late; here's Denny." She said a dozen words to the just-come Indian, and relapsed into lazy silence beside the fire. In the glow of it her hair was like copper against the dark woods behind her. By and by the young October moon would light them to ghost-like dreams of gold and crimson, the night wind ripple them to silver, but now they lay black, motionless, full of a vague life that rustled, moved and was gone.

Hilliard had learned things about the woods in a month, and done things, but he was not as proud of his first moose as he was of Saint. She might be dead tired, but she never said so, any more than she was ever out of place or in the way. He looked approvingly at her as she stretched one slight foot to the fire.

"This is a heavenly place," he said, irrelevantly; "I wish we could play about in it always!"

"I mean to," said Saint, absently; something in his voice had startled her. She remembered dully that it was October, and in December there would be nowhere for her to go but to Mrs. Vyse. Frank was going off for the winter with some men; and, anyhow, Aunt Clara was the only person who had any right to her. It was all very well to say she meant to stay where she was, but saying did not make it possible. "That's done, Denny!" She pointed to the moose meat. "You'd better get ready for dinner, Mr. Hilliard; I'm going down to the lake to get the soda water."

Hilliard grinned. "My only toilet is on me. I'll bring the light."

But she had seized a lantern and slipped by him. After the firelight it was only a dull glimmer in the darkness, and her hands shone white in it as she felt in the dark water for the chilled bottles. For a moment she looked at them. It had been a long time since she had cared what color her hands were, and she was a fool to care now. Hilliard would go back to New York and she would have to go too; and it would

mean she would never lay eyes on him. She would never be humiliated again by Aunt Clara Vyse. She was not a success in society and she knew it; but he should not know it—again! She looked up and saw he was beside her, holding out his hands for the soda water; and wished suddenly that she had had the sense to make Frank ask a party out, a party with the sort of women Hilliard had gone about with in New York. It was all very well to have him so nice to her, but he did it probably because there was no one else. It had been very different when there was.

"I must go," she said with a sound in her voice he had not heard since the day she came to him by accident. "I hear Frank calling."

"Then you'd better take the lantern. I can wriggle back in the dark, though I'm certain to smash the soda water." There was something he had come down to say to her, but he saw her face in the dull light, and changed his mind. "You don't look a bit saintlike!" he announced, provokingly. "I don't see why you're called it."

"Then you're very dense," she returned, hastily; she had no desire for personal conversation. "It's irony."

"It's poor," he said, sharply. She had been a saint to him in two ways; no girl could ever have forgotten what she had pretended to forget. "I don't believe—"

Gillespie's voice, cross as his voice could be, cut him off.

"Hi, Saint, where are you? For Heaven's sake let's have dinner! It's the last peaceful one we're going to get."

"What!" With a horrible thought she dropped the lantern and scrambled over the rocks to her brother. "It isn't—Aunt Clara?" she demanded, taking stock of his face.

Gillespie's ruddy countenance cleared.

"Lord, no," said he, devoutly; "she'd be afraid of bears—and I wish to goodness other people were! It's a party, my dear; a heavenly-day house party." He glanced gloomily at the satisfactory dinner being arranged at his elbow, the glowing fire, the very large cocktail in

his hand, and groaned aloud. "I don't know why on earth I did it," he said, as malevolently as was possible for a good-humored person in rude health, and miserably conscious that he alone was to blame. He was always doing it, and always wishing he had had sense to come out alone and be happy. "I'm not fit to be loose in general society. There must be some beastly microbe of hospitality that floats round at dinners and things and makes me do it. I wouldn't care if it lasted, but it doesn't. Here am I stuck out here for three solid weeks with women!" The last horror was in his voice. "After the last grandee business from England I vowed I'd never have another woman in the place—and here I've got three!" Disgust choking him, he remembered his cocktail, and poured it dolefully down his throat.

"What kind of women?" said Saint, sharply. She had wished not five minutes ago for this very thing, and now—she glanced involuntarily at Hilliard and the lantern coming from the shore. She had got her wish. There was no reason to feel blank—and sick. She had what she wanted. "Whom have you asked?" She stammered over it. "And how do you know they're coming?"

"I know about them," crossly, "because one of the men from Macdonald's had to follow us out here with a telegram from Tom Standish, and wants five dollars for doing it. He and his wife and the others will arrive in the morning; he's made arrangements to bring them out in ox-carts to the end of the road."

"What others?"

"I have no more information than the dead!" he replied, blandly. "I have a dim recollection of asking people to the shack, collectively, at one of those Newport dinners of Mrs. Standish's, and I know some of the women jumped at it; but for my soul, I can't remember who they were. He says there are three of them, 'Very anxious to see Indian Gardens!' What in the dickens does that mean?"

"You must have said you'd bring them out here." She looked round her in the dark with a quick reluctance to

have anyone but themselves in this place. It might have been a fool's paradise, but all the same it had been one; she did not want other women saying "how lovely"—and wondering if they were going to get their feet wet!

"Here!" grunted Gillespie. "Out here! Why, they'd be the most infernal nuisance——" He stopped because words failed him. "Shout to Hilliard, and we'll have dinner—and just let me tell you one thing! When I'm madly in love with a woman I'll bring her out here, for then I won't swear when I have to herd her about like a hen. But as it is I dimly guess we'll get home, and wait for them, as soon as we've eaten our dinner. The men can come back to-morrow, and my shack's good enough for anybody in that party."

Hilliard heard the news with stark annoyance, decently veiled. But, after all, Gillespie's parties never stayed long, unless they were mad on sport, and there was always his own somewhat retired residence; and it came over him inconsequently that he was not going to bolt back to it like a bear with a sore head! He would miss—Frank—with a sudden substitution. He had never taken much stock in girls, and he had once been brutal to this one, but now things were different. He and she were friends, and friends they would remain in spite of Tom Standish and his interloping party. It had been only a small thing he had meant to say to her, but he wished to goodness he had said it, alone by the lake and the soda water bottles. There was no chance, packed up in one canoe with Gillespie and two Indians. He embarked, annoyed and silent.

Saint, all the long paddle down the lake, was silent, too. Last night and the night before, the same stars had burned in the sky, the same moon moved serenely to the west, but to-night something they had watched was gone.

"Look." She leaned out of her wrappings to Hilliard, in front of her in the big canoe. "See the moon path! It comes straight to me; and I feel so cross I'd like to get out and walk on it away and away, as the Star Wife did from the Badger."

"But it comes to me." He was struck by the queer, longing sweetness in her voice—"straight up to me! If you go on it you'll come to me in the end. It's my moon path, too." And he looked out on the line of liquid silver, cold, alluring, strangely tangible, that leads straight to each man who sees it.

There was something odd in his voice, too, and the girl's blood leapt to it; and then flinched back to her heart. The armistice was over. There would be no chance to watch this October moon together again while Frank slumbered affably behind them. He would see her with other women; she would sink back to the girl Mrs. Vyse had thrown at his head, and any other man's. Her day was done. She felt the warm wafts of air off the land, heavy with dying leaves, heard the crush and sheer of the water under the canoe bow, as though she had never known any of them before. This world had always been her world, when Frank could get her from Mrs. Vyse; the passion for it was in her blood, but even so, she had never known it was heaven till to-night; and to-morrow it would be gone. As they rounded the last point, and were suddenly close on their own landing, she leaned forward and touched Hilliard's shoulder, very lightly.

"Look there," she said; "I ought to have known it! That wire of Mr. Standish's was a day old. They're here!"

Hilliard never heard her; he had seen before she did. They were stem on to Gillespie's landing, unseen in the dark of overhanging trees, and on the bank was a fire, men and women moving, and one of them as only one woman did in this world.

As Gillespie waked up and shouted welcomes and surprise and reproaches all in one breath, Jimmy Hilliard choked down a sentence on his own account, and it took all his wits to do it.

Coming to meet them, a lantern in her hand, was Zélie!

The last rim of the moon went down behind the western trees. The moon path had gone out.

## CHAPTER VI.

With the fantastic glow of the fire-light behind her, the yellow lantern light on her face, Mrs. Barrington stood and stared.

"Jimmy," she said, as if surprise, or something else, choked her. "Jimmy!" She had imagined him out West somewhere, and here he was at Gillespie's, in a canoe with a girl. But girls had never stood in her way, and at this one she never gave a glance.

Saint sprang out of the canoe, unhelped, putting aside Hilliard's hand, and ran lightly up the bank to greet Mrs. Standish, and Mrs. Barrington's gaze never moved from the man left behind. He was taller, surely; somehow infinitely more of a man than she remembered him; but the same—oh, the same! The unforgotten way he took off his cap, the lift of his head, the hand on the gunwale, were all Jimmy's—and yet there was a change in him! He had always been clean shaven, and now he had a mustache. Perhaps it was that which made him older and handsomer and more desirable all at once. It had been out of the question to marry him; but she had never thought he would go off as he did. She had been angry when he lost his money; furious when he refused to make any effort to keep it, when he knew that to lose it meant to lose her too; but she had never meant him to go away—nor to be happy and out in canoes with girls, either! With a quick gayety she knew she was interested, excited, overjoyed, at seeing him. She was younger than she had thought—she could care. It was not, after all, going to be dull at Gillespie's. Her laugh had a little ring of triumph in it.

"How nice to see you!" she cried, softly. "Please be glad, too!"

Hilliard felt suddenly stunned and dull. He had not remembered her hair was so dark, nor her head so exquisitely set on her shoulders. The lantern light fell on the rose-white of her skin, her curious, yellow-gray eyes, on the softness of her parted lips; and her air, her dress, her very rings, made his heart

leap. For one choking moment it seemed possible she had known he was here; had come—

As her cool fingers touched his hand he stood dashed. He was not—not glad! He did not know what he was, but it was not glad. She belonged to the old life, where he could never belong again, where he must be an outsider, taken on sufferance. The exquisite, exotic, finished air of her, which was like the air of no other woman, hurt him, tempted him—but no, he was not glad! He let her hand go.

He was just in time, for a cheerful voice was at his elbow.

"Jimmy," cried Mrs. Standish. "You dear boy! If I'd known you were here I never could have sat in that crawling ox cart. I'd have had to get out and run. Stand still, and let me look at you. Oh," she turned and shrieked to her husband, "Tom, come here! Jimmy's got a mustache."

Mrs. Barrington deliberately pressed the spring of her lantern, and it went out. She had no desire to have Laura Standish take stock of Hilliard's mustache or anything that was his, and she was furious at the interruption.

In the dark Mrs. Standish grinned, and held tight to Hilliard's hand—with intention. She had never approved of the Barrington engagement, and if Zélie had come down here to get it on again she hoped devoutly there could be two sides to that. And Hilliard's cheerful handclasp was reassuring.

"It's awfully good to see you," he said. He was sincerely glad to hear her comfortable, easy voice. "You're just the same, aren't you?"

Mrs. Standish stared. Nothing had happened to her to make the last six weeks seem like so many years.

"Of course I am." She kept in a whistle, for she had suddenly realized that he was not. There was more to him, somehow, though he had always been a dear. She dragged him round till he faced the fire and the company. "Kindly observe us." She did not lower her voice in the least. "We're the weirdest lot! Zélie and I, who detest

each other, we've come to blows over the best bedroom already—that baby Annette Laurance; and Tom, two idiots of mine whom you haven't met; and—Mr. Potter!"

Her voice took on an indefinable something at the name. Mrs. Barrington suddenly remembered that they were between her and the revealing firelight, and frowned safely. She had forgotten all about Mr. Potter.

"Potter!" echoed Hilliard. "I'd have as soon expected to see a cable car in the woods. What for?"

"He said Frank Gillespie asked him," dryly. "Anyhow, here he is, with his waistcoats and his star sapphire and his smile. You ought to have seen Frank's face when he saw him!" She was joyfully conscious of a rustle of silk underskirt; Zélie had started angrily. "Come along and speak to Tom."

Mrs. Barrington was silent as she picked her way after them to the fire. She was suddenly ashamed of Potter and as suddenly aware of the girl who advanced to meet her. She had been prepared for the long-legged gawk of two years ago—and here was a girl with an air as good as her own; handsome; and horribly young. She really had to make an effort to smile. It dawned on her that since this was the sort of girl who had been out in the canoe with Jimmy, it was well to warn her off then and there.

"Such a charming surprise for Mrs. Standish to find Jimmy Hilliard here," she said, lightly, when her greetings were over. "She had no idea."

"No?" said Saint, placidly.

Zélie promptly misunderstood her.

"Oh, he and I—are different!" the slight embarrassment was as well put on as her clothes. "We are rather—friends."

"Yes?" said Saint, just as placidly; she took an immediate and thorough dislike to Jimmy's "friend," with her lovely, delicate face, and the scent which clung about her and fought incongruously with the aromatic wood smoke. "Such a pity he can't stay," she said, idly. "He says he must go back to his own house."

"I thought he was with you!" sharply; she could not help it.

"So he was." There was the weight of a hundred explanations in the voice. "Do you mean we've turned him out?"

"Oh, not at all," carelessly. "Shall I call him and ask him why he's going?"

But she did not. Hilliard's good-nights had brought him to her elbow, and as he stood there he looked at her and Zélie.

She had turned to him and asked him something, but he did not hear it. His heart had leapt in him with a shameful joy. He had got over it. He did not care if he met her a thousand times, with a thousand Potters in her train. For Mr. Potter had kindly and hastily joined the party.

"Where are you going?" Zélie repeated, softly. "We're not driving you away?"

Mr. Potter happened to be looking at her. He stopped dead in his approach and fingered his star sapphire breastpin thoughtfully.

"Home!" said Hilliard. "I've an old shack out here. Good-night, Potter," with a careless nod that had been all very well in R. I. M. Co. Hilliard, but was out of place for a broken man.

Potter wondered sharply if he knew anything. But his eyes, his smiling, bronzed face, were bent on Mrs. Barrington. She was as exquisite, as alluring, as perfect as ever; but— He really felt like throwing his cap up in the air and cheering. He was free! And the world was a good world, and young. But to the girl who stood by the look on his face meant—other things.

She saw him down to his canoe, because she always did it, and watched him get in dully. But as he stuck his paddle in the water he held it there.

"Good-night, Saint," he said. "I say——"

"What?"

"Oh, nothing!" hastily. "Good-night." For, after all, what was there to say except that he felt suddenly cheerful, and years younger, and free? There was nothing to make her heart



lighten as she watched him and his canoe melt into the great dark outside the little firelight, but lighten it did. The Inn of the Long Year might have its drawbacks, but to-night it was a good, useful place.

The others had gone in, and for a moment she stood outside the open door and the light of the house, smiling to herself; he had not been anxious to stay with his dear "friend," after all. She would have liked to sit down where she was and watch the fire die and the stars wheel out over her head; but she had to go in and herd the women to bed and see they had all they wanted, just as if she had been glad to see them. But before she could make up her mind to do it a voice out of the dark of the veranda paralyzed her. She had never heard a man speak like that, in insulting authority.

"You knew Hilliard was here."

"Per-haps I did." Mrs. Barrington's drawl was unmistakable. "Why?"

There was no answer and she laughed.

"He was a delightful person to be engaged to," she murmured, politely.

"Then why don't you take him on again?" Saint knew suddenly that it was Mr. Potter speaking, and that if it were dishonorable to listen she did not care.

"Take him on?" repeated Mrs. Barrington, coolly. "Oh, but I don't know that he ever was off! He didn't tell me so." She had saved him the trouble.

"All the same, he's out here for the Gillespie girl," retorted Potter, slowly. And Mrs. Barrington laughed out loud.

"Old Clara Vyse threw *her* at his head two years ago," she returned, serenely, "and he—well, he ducked! What a goose you are, Alonzo," cruelly—his cards read 'Mr. A. Starr Potter'—"the girl was a failure; and she hasn't a cent. She's only Frank Gillespie's half sister, and he can't even make her an allowance. There was some story about her mother—she's dead now, but old Gillespie divorced her and cut the child off with a shilling. Clara Vyse has her for charity." She laughed again, and went

into the house, with Mr. Potter following her.

Saint stood very still in the shadow. She had no thoughts except that it was October and very cold; and that it was no news to her that Hilliard had "ducked," nor that Frank could not take her from Aunt Clara.

Her hand had lain mechanically on the pocket of her shirt, and as it clinched there she started with a sudden sense of loss. Her little book, her precious odd volume of the *Morte Arthure* was gone. In the hurry of starting from Indian Gardens she must have dropped it, and she would never see it again if she went back a hundred times. Well, it did not matter! She did not want to read about Lancelot any more; nor Guinevere. She realized, with a sick sense of shame, that she had always despised Elaine—but, then, so had Lancelot. She turned and went into the house to see that Mrs. Barrington was comfortably lodged, with an odd laugh in her throat. Guinevere had never stayed with Elaine.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Were you looking for anyone?" asked Zélie, softly.

She was a vision in the moonrise as she moved lightly into Hilliard's view, but he was barely aware of it.

"Miss Gillespie," he said, shortly. He had been trying to get hold of her all day, only to retire to the inn disgusted and come back the second he had swallowed what he called dinner.

"I'm afraid you're late." Zélie's wide eyes were honestly regretful. "She's gone down the lake, with—some one!" vaguely. "At least, I think that's where she went." She preferred to forget that she had five minutes ago heard Gillespie call his sister, and that she must be still in the house.

"I'll wait," said Hilliard, coolly; and it was a pity he was out of earshot, since he was in plain sight.

Saint stood just behind him in the window of Gillespie's own room and watched the moon come up over the

lake. It was a glorious moon, like a William Allen Richardson rose; she repeated to herself firmly that it was glorious and that if by and by it would make a path of silver, now it made a path of gold—for the two figures moving to the shore. For Mrs. Barrington had sensibly suggested it offered a wider view for the missing lady. Some one had a fire at the landing, and a drift of wood smoke came between her and the loitering pair that somehow made her eyes smartingly dim. She shook her shoulders angrily, and turned round as Gillespie spoke for the second time.

"Glory Anna, Saint, you'll have to help me! I never saw such a hang-fire show in my life."

"What's wrong?" she asked. It was all wrong as far as she was concerned; Hilliard had deserted her, the other men were neither here nor there, and for the women she did not like Annette Laurence much more than Mrs. Barrington; she was altogether too brown-eyed and guileless. The only one she did like was Mrs. Standish, but she had her husband and two followers; with forethought she always took about with her her own party for bridge.

"They want to camp at Indian Gardens, that's what's wrong!" he said, forcefully. "And I'll give a good guess they don't. But they're getting restive here. For goodness' sake, what am I going to do with them? I tell you I lay awake last night wondering about it. Laura Standish wanted to go shooting, and I took her—and I thought she'd have apoplexy before she got home. And Standish says he's on a keg; he won't even drink beer, and it's like smoking on a powder magazine to talk to him. Laura's idiots, Bruce and Webster, are bored; and Annette's been rude to that hatchet-faced Pongo, Potter. I don't wonder, but all the same he's my guest, and because I told her so she's gone off cross—and I can't find her!" The sheepish voice was funny—from Gillespie.

"I'll find her," said Saint, promptly; she would not have any airs from Annette. But as she turned to go she hid a contemptuous wonder if it were the yel-

low moon or the softly keen October air which made everybody in camp silly about some one else. It must run in the family, if Frank had it.

"I'll beg you off two months of Aunt Clara's if you'll put things straight here," offered Gillespie, weakly. "I don't care what they do so long as they're enjoying themselves here, and don't lug me off to Indian Gardens. You go and talk to Potter, there's a good soul! Lord knows who brought him. The Standishes say they didn't, and Annette says I asked him. I dare say I did; but if I did, you won't catch me loose in mixed society again in a hurry! Where's Mrs. Barrington?"

"Out."

"Where's Hilliard?"

"Out with her," dryly.

"Best thing that could happen to him if they patched it up again, I suppose!" he said, grudgingly. "She could pull any string she liked to get him on, or I'm a Dutchman. But all the same, I hope she won't get him back. I haven't got extra much faith in those yellow eyes of hers."

"I don't think there's any patching needed," observed his sister; for the pair outside had vanished. Unconsciously she put her head up magnificently, with a carriage the Saint of a week ago did not know.

Gillespie bestowed a sudden attention on her.

"Great Scott, Saint, you're getting to be a stunner!" he said, bluntly, with a brotherly eye on her bronze hair and the gallantry of her face and bearing. "If Hilliard weren't a beggar I'd back you to go in and take him from the celebrated widow."

"I don't want him!" angrily. Was everyone, herself included, going to throw her at Hilliard's head? The color flew into her face and made her furious. She did want him; that was the hateful, shameful part of it; if he cared for her she would want him if he were a beggar ten times over. She took a quick resolve as she sought out Annette on her way to amuse Mr. Potter. No one should ever say again that Hilliard had had to "duck," no matter what she had to do

to prevent it. And the neglected Potter, seated sulkily by the living-room fire, caught her eye.

"I'll try it," she thought, deliberately. "I suppose I can talk the silly stuff Annette does if I put my mind to it. I'd give anything, do anything, to be amused and interested and out of myself long enough to forget what a silly schoolgirl fool I've been ever since I first saw Jimmy, and Aunt Clara—" but the thought broke off sharply. The conservatory had not been Aunt Clara's fault. She had been a plain idiot about him; and his face that was too good-looking for a man; and his manner that had meant nothing. She was done with pretending about Hilliard.

Mr. Potter looked up from a remarkably unsatisfactory train of thought about Zélie, and was suddenly conscious that Gillespie's sister was absolutely and astoundingly handsome in the plain brown corduroy garments that were just three shades darker than her hair, and that there was something promising in her eyes.

Mrs. Barrington, strolling perforce into the living room towards ten o'clock, checked on the threshold. The lamps and firelight shone on the unhewn cedar walls, the moose and bear skins on the floor, the glasses and decanters on a side table, and on four besotted bridge players to whom the October moon was not worth a tallow candle in a bottle; but the room, for her, was empty.

"Seen Annette?" asked Mrs. Standish, looking up from her cards with a momentary return to interest in earthly things. She had discovered with wild surprise that her niece, without a penny, had taken the fancy of Frank Gillespie, who had never given a thought to a girl in his life.

"She's with Mr. Gillespie," returned Zélie, absently. It was Potter who was missing—and the Gillespie girl! Surely he would never, never dare. She was suddenly frightened. She turned to the remarkably silent person in the doorway behind her.

"I'll come out again, if you don't mind," she offered, softly. "It isn't so late, after all."

"It won't be late here for six hours," returned Hilliard, coolly, with a look at the bridge players. A good manner is a great assistance in hiding the feelings; Zélie was not the only person who had found the room empty.

When a girl makes a friend of you and placidly drops you as soon as there is another soul to talk to, it is not precisely flattering. Try as he would, he had never seen the Saint he had left standing on the lake shore in the dark, with the great camp fire behind her; and try as he would, he could not find where the difference in her came in. She had never avoided him; she was merely out of the way, or talking to some one, or doing hostess with a capability he had never dreamed she possessed. And he missed her—horribly, unreasonably; with the woman who had been the desire of his heart at his elbow.

He did not know how hard she was trying to keep him there. In her sensible moments cold thoughts of her extravagances, her debts, and her understanding with Mr. Potter, would come over her, and make her forswear Hilliard forever; and when she was face to face with him she cared for none of those things, for nothing, except getting him back again. She had set about it very, very carefully; but in the last two days she had come to be afraid of Potter. There was something in his eyes, more than all, in his silence, that frightened her. He was a mean man, in spite of his mountains of money and his generous manners; for a couple of days it might be as well for Hilliard to go to his own house—and stay there. She looked up in the moonlight with his dismissal on her tongue and saw him yards away from her with his eyes on the lake.

A canoe had shot out of the darkness into the liquid silver of the moonpath, and in it—clear, dark and distinct—were a man and a girl.

"Saint!" thought Hilliard. He knew every motion of her wrist as she slipped her paddle in and out of the water, and as he knew he heard her laugh; and was seized with an unreasonable, ugly rage. He did not hear a word Zélie was saying, which happened to be a pity.

"If you don't mind I'll go and help them to land," he said, keeping his voice even. "It's pretty rocky down there."

He wondered as he went what Gillespie was thinking of to let his sister go about alone in the moonlight with a man like Potter. And because it was not his business to say so he stubbed his toe on a stone and swore. As he saw Saint's face he could have sworn again, and still more unreasonably. It was for his sake, not Potter's, that the girl's eyes lit, and her heart leapt in her. He cared; he was angry! She had never thought anything she did could make him care. Since it worked she would go on with it. She stood breathless when Hilliard helped her out. In his place she would have let Potter get out as he could, and she waited for him to do it; and he might have, if he could have read her mind. As it was, he held out his hand to Mr. Potter's awkward scramble and steadied him to dry land, lifted the canoe out of water, and without a word went back to Mrs. Barrington, quick and straight.

Saint turned sharply away; but Mr. Potter, for one minute, looked after him. He had found out what he wanted to know. It was Zélie, still; not the Gillespie girl.

He walked to the house in thoughtful silence.

She was amusing herself with Hilliard, of course, but he had no desire to have her keep on doing it. As for seriously taking him on again, he was peniless, out of the question for a woman whose month's frocks cost a year's income. But all the same he would not have it. He would give Zélie a fright, thorough and satisfying. All the evening he had looked at Pauline Gillespie—and thought of Zélie's eyes; had made carefully veiled love to her—and remembered the sort of love he would have made to Zélie. He would not have any more of it, and Zélie thinking she managed him. He stopped in the veranda to light a cigar and did not know his hand shook on the match.

Saint, a little behind him, sat down on the steps and forgot him. They had stopped playing bridge inside, and she

was just out of earshot of the voices that floated through the open door to Mr. Potter.

"I tell you, she won't get him back," Mrs. Standish was saying, obstinately, as if it were the end of an argument. And Mr. Bruce, the boldest of her two followers, laughed.

"She will, when she finds out about Hilliard's light!" Zélie had snubbed him that very day.

"Skittles!" Mrs. Standish always spoke her mind. "Do you mean that silly ghost light Frank told Annette about?"

"Oh, I bar ghosts! I mean crude petroleum. That place of his is on fire half the time, in the ground; he must know about it. I bet anything that in two months he'll have it leased for oil wells. It wouldn't take much capital to run a bit of a railway—and then, we'll see about the widow! Jim Hilliard's no fool with his ghost light that he doesn't like talked about till he's decided about that lady."

"Now look here," said Mrs. Standish, strenuously, with the comfortable consciousness of seclusion, "if you're a friend of Jim Hilliard's, you'll keep that stuff about petroleum to yourself in future. He told me he didn't know what it was, and you'd better not know either."

"Don't see what you mean," was the dense reply.

"I mean Zélie! You know how she treated him when he lost his money, for I told you. And if she thinks he's got oil on his land she'll marry him—if there's enough!—and he doesn't deserve it. She'll make him lease it, and get every cent out of him, and then get tired of him; she's just that sort of a selfish cat."

"But if he likes cats——"

"You idiot," with late caution her voice trailed off a little, but not before the listener had gathered something about "that child and Hilliard," "and if he does, it isn't good for him. I hope he's got gallons of oil at that queer place of his instead of one mangy ghost, but I'm not going to have dear Zélie know it. See?"

"Oh, I don't pine to enlighten her! I'll promise to hold my tongue on it forever, if you'll only let me have a drink now."

At the shuffle of feet Mr. Potter silently removed himself and his unlit cigar; the hand that put it back into his pocket was perfectly steady. He had lost Zélie, when she knew; and he would not lose her for a fool like Hilliard, who was unsinkable, like a cork in water. But even a cork might be fished out and burnt. He went hastily into the house, or he would have seen that Mrs. Barrington was standing in the dark just below him, almost under the veranda. She had left Hilliard ten minutes ago, helping Gillespie in with his canoe, and come quietly to the house. She had heard every word as well as Potter. Now, for reasons of her own, she went quickly over to the girl whose presence on the steps had mercifully preserved her from ascending them, and laid a timid hand on her arm.

"I do wish you would be friendly with me," she said in her dragging contralto.

"It would bore you," Saint spoke with conviction, before she thought, and the other woman laughed.

"Won't you try?" All her charm was in her voice as she sat down.

While Hilliard came up and said good-night she stuck there like a burr; after he had gone she linked her arm in Saint's and spoke, musingly, for reasons of her own, again.

"What a dear he is! Almost any other man would have been stupid enough to make things awkward for both of you."

"I don't know what you mean." Saint looked up with unadvised defiance. "How?"

Mrs. Barrington, with soft insistence, told her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The October sunlight fell softly veiled on a yellow gray space of withered grass, walled in by thickets of golden birches, blotched with the fire of maples, that stretched for miles till they faded

in the low blue haze of the horizon. The middle of the clear space was taken up by a tablecloth spread for luncheon, and the sunniest side of it by Mrs. Barrington, for once alone.

But she had not the look of a lonely person; her face was alert and her eyes stretched to their fullest capacity down a long alley from which Hilliard would, or would not, turn up. She had got all the ecstasy of surprise and triumph off her face last night, though luck was on her side, after all. She could afford to send Potter flying now, with his star sapphires and his smile, and his horrid air of suggesting that he owned her because he knew things. Let him know! Hilliard had oil lands, and she knew some Standard Oil people, and it would all be easy—and exactly as it had been. It was not till she actually saw him coming that her heart leapt; she had not been too sure of him last night. She looked at him with an access of proprietorship. How tall he was, and good-looking, and what a credit to marry. She made up her mind on the instant. Whoever knew or spoke about oil, she would not. It would be penniless, broken Jimmy Hilliard she would get engaged to over again, and stick to. And as she smiled at him fate kindly assisted her.

Mr. Hilliard was in a vile temper.

He had arrived hotfoot, after breakfast, to see Saint and put things straight; he was tired of being shunted off with Zélie—he wanted to look at the moon path that very night with the girl who had first showed it to him. And at ten in the morning she was gone—up the lake with Potter. That she had also taken two Indians and was on the strict business of finding a good place for the women to meet the men for lunch did not console Mr. Hilliard, who incontinently went shooting instead of joining her; and now on his return from a miserable morning had stumbled over her with the newly attached Potter in her immediate background. He stopped because he could not help it, and spoke to her.

She was changed and he saw it; even to her dress. The brown of her cordu-

roy coat was cut by a scarlet tie that consequently annoyed him; it was out of tune, and something in her eyes matched it. It did not dawn on him that besides fighting Potter he had to fight Mrs. Barrington and her softly unescapable midnight confidences that had left the girl in a fury of rage and shame.

"Aren't you even going to say 'good-morning'?" he inquired, with injury, thankfully aware that Potter, struggling to cut a flaming bough, was out of hearing.

"Haven't I said it?" There was hostility in her eyes.

"Not for three days," he said, grimly. "Look here, I want to speak to you."

Saint stared. It was the first time he had betrayed any desire for her society.

"I haven't been exactly out of your reach," she said, dryly.

"It's just what you have been," he returned, with emphasis. "You were awfully good to me while we were alone, and I dare say I bored you, but we were good friends enough for me to ask you something. May I?"

"I——" A sudden softness flooded her face, a too hasty joy. Was he going to ask her for the old friendship back again? For—— "Yes," she said, shyly. She was ready to hold out her hand to him and beg him to help her with these women who talked nothing she wanted to hear and the men who made love to her if she would let them; and his very first words froze every good impulse in her.

"Don't think I'm speaking because I want to bore you with my society," he said, quickly—Zélie's tongue had cut both ways, and effectually—"but it's Potter! Don't go about with him, Saint. He isn't—I can't talk behind his back—but he really isn't!"

Saint straightened up as if he had struck her. Potter was Mrs. Barrington's property, any fool knew that, but she was not going to have Hilliard warn her off.

"Shall I call him and let you say it to his face?" she asked, pale over the scarlet tie that did not suit her.

"You know I can't. And I

know"—floundering into his only chance and spoiling it—"it's no business of mine what you do, but—— Ah, Saint. Don't go! There's something else."

"I don't think I want to hear it, Mr. Hilliard," she said, very clearly. If she were none of his business, neither were other people. "As for Mr. Potter, he may be all you mean, but he's kind—and polite—to me. And don't you think you've said enough, behind people's backs?" With a significance she bit her lip for. He would know Zélie had told her things.

Unluckily he knew nothing of the kind, since they had been pure fabrications. He stood silent, his debonaire face dashed and blank.

"It was something that concerned you," he said at last, "but I won't bore you with it." He was paler than she was as he turned away and heard her call gayly to Potter. As he reached the clearing he was glad, for the first time, to see Zélie waiting for him; there was some one, at least, who would be pleased to see him.

Potter, returning with the bough he had secured with labor and profanity, saw something in Miss Gillespie's face that told him his chance had come. He had been trying all the morning to get her on the subject of Hilliard's land and the queer light that burned there, without any success at all. He had seen through and through her the night he came, and now her lip was trembling; he put that with Hilliard's speaking to her as he walked beside her to lunch. She would not be on Zélie's side, and he had no scruples about dragging her to his.

He was not the Gillespie class, had not wished to be till one day two years ago, when he first saw Hugh Barrington's widow. Then he quietly dropped his intimates, changed his neckties, bought a place on Long Island and another at Newport, and became a person who could be disliked, but never overlooked. And he had but just passed the outside door of society when he heard Mrs. Barrington was engaged to young Hilliard. What he did and what he



thought were only known to Mr. Potter, but the day R. I. M. Co. stock went to nothing he was not surprised, nor was he surprised when he heard the engagement was off. He gave a dinner a night or two after, and Zélie Barrington was at it. Since then he had been her shadow, with the cleverness of a man who has always had to work for what he wants. Nothing less than her beauty, her exclusiveness, would do for the wife of Alonzo Potter, who had suddenly taken to himself another god than money. He had felt his prize in his hand till last night, but if what he had heard were true—it was all up, if Zélie knew it. He had all the astuteness of a small-minded man who has succeeded in big things, and he saw through Zélie. It gave him an ugly gust of hatred for her that went over his purpose like a mist and then cleared again. He had manipulated things before from the outside, and realized it was more easily and better done from the in. He looked at Saint where she sat with an untouched plate in her lap.

"Beautiful place your brother's got out here, and wonderfully sheltered," he observed, meditatively. "I should never have thought it could have been comfortable to sit out in October like—this!" He had hesitated the least atom, as if he had meant to say "like that." Certainly his eyes were fixed on two people lunching gayly at a retired corner of the tablecloth.

"They seem all right." She did not even pretend to be blind to his meaning. If Hilliard chose to sit with Mrs. Barrington, let him. "I must go and hurry the men with more potatoes."

"Never hurry anyone unless you have to—and then do it hard!" with a sudden glance out of his small eyes that were exactly the color of the star sapphire in his tie. "I wonder—" He stopped, and took some mustard.

"What?" listlessly.

"Oh, nothing; only—if he's good enough for her! I've heard things—once or twice."

"What kind of things?" The voice was not saintly, but Potter had never heard her nickname.

"Well," slowly, "there was a girl, for instance—I never knew her name; it was before I cared about society." He was clever enough to be absolutely frank about what everybody knew. "But they said he led her on till she fully expected him to marry her." He shrugged his shoulders.

Saint was afraid to look at him.

"He doesn't seem to have," she said, flippantly, with cold lips.

"No. He behaved brutally to her, even to letting her find out his real opinion of her by chance, in a conservatory." No one who heard the disapproving voice could have thought he meant it to sting.

For a second she had nearly turned on him and betrayed herself. Then she remembered that if Zélie knew things from Hilliard, Potter had got them from her; and she would not have it.

"Oh," she said, contemptuously, and it took all her strength, "that old story! The girl was an idiot. I—I knew her. He treated her exactly as she deserved." And she lifted her glass to her lips to hide their trembling. Was that old story to haunt her till she died? Did everybody know it—and from Hilliard? She felt wildly that she would be grateful to anyone who would shield her from it; she hated Hilliard, hated him. And was aware of Potter's voice.

"I suppose he's down here looking after lumber, or pulp, or something; men who've ruined themselves in one thing are generally hotfoot to do it in another. He's probably going to boss a lumber camp here this winter. He's got enough property."

"He couldn't," she said, dully, "not on his land. Nobody would work for him; he can't get even an Indian to live with him. They say his place is haunted."

"Haunted!" Mr. Potter grinned. "Do you mean to tell me these people," with a look at the men round the fire, "believe in ghosts?"

"They do in Mr. Hilliard's ghost. His house lay empty for years and not a squatter went near it. They're afraid of the light."

"What sort of light?" He was getting to it now.

"I don't know. It burns round, like a dying fire, by his cabin, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another. I've seen it. And I've seen more than that. Sometimes it flares up just like gas and goes dead out again. If you're thinking," with deliberate malice that hurt her as much as her hearer, "about that," with a nod at Mrs. Barrington, "it won't be helped on by lumbering. His place is worthless; he says so himself. And if it weren't, no one would work for him. He told me so, when first he came." Her voice shook a little; things had been different when first he came.

Potter said nothing for a long minute. He had not been prepared to find the thing so true. Worthless, and flaring out like gas! And Standish had told him the night before that he had offered Hilliard a position and Hilliard had refused it; refused a chance with Standish to stay on worthless land. Well, more fool he for not telling Standish the truth!

"I'd like to see your ghost light," he said, idly, and he was not at his best when he smiled. "Will you show it to me?"

Saint started. She knew how Hilliard felt about it; knew he would have no desire for Potter to spy on it and his property. She had forgotten she hated him.

"I don't think——" she began, and unconsciously looked straight at Hilliard questioningly.

"Miss Gillespie wants you," said Zélie, maliciously. Now that she dared lose her head about him, it was joy to torment the girl who had tried to annex him before she came.

"What?" Hilliard bent forward to catch Saint's eye, but she had started like a frightened child at Zélie's voice. "I think not," he said, looking at her attitude and Potter's; and the devil allowed him to shrug his shoulders.

It was all Saint saw; and she spoke to Potter under her breath, as if a devil prompted her to.

"I'll take you—to-night!"

## CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Barrington sat alone in the fire-lit living room and yawned from sheer well-being. She had had a most successful day, and a glow ran through her as she reflected that it would also be a profitable one. Hilliard had been—Hilliard!—for the first time; and the old ways, the old looks—almost—had gone to her head. She would have him back now if she had to tell him so; and she closed her eyes to think of him, basking like a cat in the fireshine, sumptuous in a long, silk tea gown that shone coral and flame as the light took it.

The very beauty of her was like a blow to the man unseen in the doorway. It had all been his a week ago; and now it was beyond his hand. Unless—but the high and mighty insolence of her eyes as she glanced up and saw him told him there was no unless now. She knew. He came into the room and stood, looking down at her.

Zélie did not trouble herself to say anything at all, unless unblinded vision spoke for her. It was no longer worth while to worry about him. He was nothing but a little, wizened man, with a loathsome star sapphire, and she had been a fool ever to let him dominate her. She smiled contemptuously, knowing that yesterday she would have feared his small eyes and that he had suddenly broken the silence.

"You're enjoying yourself out here?" he asked, politely.

"I never enjoy *myself*," placidly. "Other people—if you like!"

Potter, instead of answering, rang the bell for a cocktail. He needed it. He was being thrown over, cast aside like an old cloak; and he would make her pay for it. The silence between them was a duel, and the man's mind flashed in it like a blade that means to get home.

"Other people, of course," he assented, at last. He threw the olive out of the empty glass into the fire. He would not ask her anything; that time was by. "I'm sending a man in with some telegrams about stocks," he said, suddenly. "Want anything done for you?"

Zélie shook a languid head. She was doing well on margins and a rising market, thanks to him; but she left out the latter clause.

"I'm quite all right, thank you. Mr. Standish got some wires to-day. Things are going up still."

"Going up still," assented Mr. Potter; his eyes were suddenly very shining.

But he had done all she needed in that way, and she laughed.

"You won't be able to get any answer to your telegrams. Don't you know we're going to Indian Gardens to-morrow? All of us, to live in tents and hunt moose. Frank's so angry about it—says it's too wild, and too cold, and all sorts of things. But we're going. Jimmy Hilliard," with a little laugh, "managed Frank." It sounded better than Annette Laurance.

"Yes," said Potter. This move was news, and unwelcome. He wanted to stay on the spot; and for a moment he looked at her to see if Frank had been managed on purpose. He was sick of Hilliard's affairs; half a word from Zélie, and he would have been thankful to let his light alone—but the half word was not coming. He would do to her what she deserved to-night, and in another week—he would get back a woman who loved another man! If he would take her. And he was not sure, though the firelight on her veiled eyes and shining gown made him heady.

He was headier still when he got out of the house after dinner and found Saint waiting for him at the landing. A new thought had come to him, a fresh way to punish Zélie—and he meant to use it; but he must be sure he needed it before he began. He hardly talked at all as the canoe slipped unseen and silent out into the lake, and Saint was more silent still. It seemed hours when her quick voice startled him.

"That's the light." She brought the canoe to a standstill with a sweep of her paddle, and her passenger, for the first time, drew his breath easily.

If it had not been for the end in view, the need of hurry, and the impossibility of getting anyone else to bring him over here in secret, he would long ago have

asked Miss Gillespie to turn back. He was extremely careful of his own personal safety, and to-night he was a bundle of nerves. There was no moon, and in the pitch dark it had been terrifying to feel the frail canoe jar over unseen rocks, and bump over snags that the girl who paddled had not even seemed to notice.

"That's Hilliard's light!" she repeated, impatiently. "But if I were you I wouldn't tell him I'd seen it."

Potter's fear for his precious skin fell from him like a garment. He sat dumb, looking where she had pointed.

On the side of a hill was a round, red glow, that was neither burning brushwood nor a built fire. As he stared the shape of it altered. It spread, grew, turned more deeply fiery. He caught his breath as the glow sprang high in the air in a blue flame of gas, and died out as sharply as it had come, only to creep on again. His idea of an oil field was a picture in a country school geography, and he saw it before him to a line. Only he had not been prepared for something threatening in the glare of it, that turned him cold to the bone, before his exultation had got hold of him. And then he got himself in hand with every bit of his will.

"Rather marvelous," he said, casually. "I don't wonder they say it's ghostly. Were you ever close to it?"

"The ground's bad," she said, dully. Now that she had brought him she was sorry. It was none of his business. "You won't—" But he had cut her off understandingly.

"No, I shan't speak about it. I don't wonder Hilliard doesn't like it talked of." Neither would he, in Hilliard's shoes.

Consideration for anyone else was so rare on Mr. Potter's lips that even Saint felt it did not fit there, but the unaccountable shiver that had taken him at sight of Hilliard's light was gone as she turned the canoe, and with it the prudent silence he had preserved throughout the evening. It was a Potter whom Saint had never seen who began to talk, awkwardly, at first; then with a fascination that held her, she was not sure

whether against her will or not. He was clever to the bone, and the balked passion in him lent him power. By the time they reached the landing the girl was happier than she had been all day, with the quick excitement of listening to him. All his successes had come from a power of throwing his mind into other people's, and acting as in their place he would have had others do to him. As a woman might have tried to wean him from Zélie, so did he try to blot out Hilliard from the girl who sat opposite him in the dark, paddling slowly now, and talking as he would have had her talk. He poured balm into her old wounds, gave wine to her pride, life and fire to her weariness and her sick heart; and she never knew he was doing it, or that through her he meant to put off this Indian Gardens expedition, till he was ready to go. It had not taken much penetration to see that she hated the thought of it; therefore he said it would be charming.

"I don't know," said Saint. She waked sharply from the comfortable dream that she was happy because some one was kind to her. "It's no better than this;" but she knew quite well she lied; it had been a thousand times better than this when she and Hilliard and Frank had been alone there before these strange people came. She hated going back there now. There was only one place to land, and some one might pick up her lost book that she and Hilliard had read in together. She longed unmercifully for it and the marks he had made in it—and straightened up where she sat. She would never see it again. And she was out in the canoe with Mr. Potter, who was kind, and liked her. Nobody else cared, not even Frank; Annette had taken all the interest he had in anything. Potter leaned forward and spoke to her as she drew the canoe to the landing place.

"They're playing bridge in the house, and it's as warm as summer out here. Won't you sit here for a little, till you can slip in to bed? You must be tired. Besides—Miss Gillespie, if you don't want the bother of taking them all across the lake to that Indian place, I

think I could put it off for a day or two!" The words were only kind, the voice was a thousand times more.

"Put it off," she repeated. Oh! if he only could! She could not bear to go back to the place where she had been so happy; and see Zélie happy instead; she had learned to bear it here. "You can't," she whispered.

"I might—I don't know," he replied, thoughtfully. He had no influence over anyone but Zélie, and he had lost that; but he was wonderfully weatherwise for a town man, and he put his faith in the sky. The hot, unseasonable clouds were full of rain. "If I can, you'll be glad?"

"I'll be—glad."

"Then that's all right," he said, promptly. "Now I'm going in to get you a wrap." He must get her out of the way somehow for ten minutes, or she might guess things and turn on him, "and if I'm not boring you I'll come out again. That is, unless you want to go in."

Saint shook her head. She did not want to talk to any of them. She was surprised at his thoughtfulness, and, when he was gone, surprised at something else. She was thankful to get rid of him; he left a bad taste in her mouth. She jumped out of the canoe and sat down out of sight.

For a man who was getting a wrap out of the hall Potter was a long time; yet for a man at work on business that must be done thoroughly and at once, he was quick. He stood behind the bridge players and wrote a sheaf of telegrams with a feeling glance at Tom Standish, whose wife hated him; he did not particularly care that he was giving her more reason to do it. But though he was quick in the house, it took him longer to find the man who was to carry in his messages. He was an outsider, not one of Gillespie's men, and it took time to put sense into him.

Saint, alone under the dark, unfriendly sky, had an absurdly guilty conscience.

"I wish I hadn't taken him," she muttered. "I don't believe he was exactly sight-seeing, and I don't know why, but I'd like to tell Mr. Hilliard I took him."

She kicked the grass at her feet, thinking. "I believe I've been a fool about him," she broke out. "Just because he hasn't been near me I've believed everything that woman chose to tell me. I don't think he said all those things about me, and being terrified when he found I was here, any more than I believe he's going to marry her. If he were, he'd tell; he'd be proud of it! I won't be put against him. I'll speak to him in the morning about Potter." Her common-sense reflections had cheered her. She got up to go deviously to the house, and be rid of Mr. Potter.

On the very edge of the home clearing she stopped as if she had been shot. It was not so dark there, and she had run straight on Mrs. Barrington and Hilliard; she was not wise enough to guess the former had seen her first, slipped close to Hilliard's shoulder, inside his arm, and clung to him.

"Oh, Jimmy, *darling*," she cried, with babyish terror, "what's that?"

"Nothing." The darling was a trick of Zélie's, and he never noticed it. "What a goose you are!" For as he turned, Saint was gone.

It was true, then, about the engagement, or true enough; and if Zélie told the truth there she had about other things. She marched straight back to the canoe—and Mr. Potter.

## CHAPTER X.

"You're glad it's raining," said Annette Laurance. She raised her little round face to Gillespie crossly and took stock of him with shallow brown eyes. "You didn't want us to go to your old Indian Gardens."

"I don't mean you to go," he corrected, coolly, and there happened to be a hush in the big room, where the rain had bound them. The only people who did not shriek simultaneously at him that he was a wretch, and they must go when the weather cleared, were Mr. Potter and Saint. They sat together at a retired table, with a pack of cards spread on it, but they were not playing

any game—with cards. The girl's clear cheeks were scarlet, and once and again Mrs. Standish had looked at her anxiously. If she had not been afraid of making things worse she would have spoken to Gillespie; Potter was no friend for a girl. But Frank was blind, and it was none of her business. After all, Saint had to make a good marriage; she could get nothing anywhere else.

"We don't care what you mean, we're going!" declared Annette. "If you don't take us we'll go home."

Gillespie, for a man who had been dashed at their coming, was ludicrously startled. He began to speak under his breath to her and stopped sheepishly; the whole room was listening.

"Why don't you want to take us?" she demanded. "Is it the bother?"

"No; for I won't have it." He looked round and took in the roomful, hoping some one had some sense and would back him up. "But the weather's broken, for one thing; we may have it bitterly cold any day, and even now you won't find it exactly balmy sleeping in tents; and for another, if you must have it, Indian Gardens isn't a good place to be wandering in for people who weren't brought up to it. If you want the truth, I'm afraid of it."

"Bears!" shrieked Annette. "Wolves and things? Oh, let's go to-morrow! I'd love to see a bear."

"Nothing so gay—as bears chasing you," said Gillespie, maliciously, "but there won't be anything as romantic. It would all be very plain. One of you'd stray one morning, I should walk my legs off all day, and—well, they looked for a boy there last winter, white men, Indians, and brindled—they found him ten yards off the path this spring!"

"Lovely," cooed Annette, with the comfortable shiver people have for railway accidents in Oregon. "Then, we'll never go out alone."

"Much help you'd be to each other," he said, scornfully. "You'd have to have an Indian apiece to look after you. And on my honor the only way I'd take you would be if you all swore not to stir a foot off the path going or coming, nor ever to leave camp by yourselves, nor

do anything without a guide. And I don't see why you ladies want to go. There are moose, of course, but you wouldn't want to see us kill one, and you'd be certain to get pneumonia," he concluded, with finality.

Annette observed him innocently; then she bent over him to poke the fire.

"Frank," she whispered, "oh, Frank, I do want to go!"

Mr. Gillespie looked round the crowded room, with profanity in his soul.

"Well," he muttered, weakly, "I don't know! If it clears—if Hilliard thinks——"

"Bah, don't bother about him! He hasn't been near us for two days, and anyhow, he never speaks to anyone but Uncle Tom and Mrs. Barrington. You've said we'd go, go, go; as soon as it clears!" and she did a little dance round him.

Saint wondered how any girl could be so light-hearted. Not that she was sad; a queer indifference, a feeling that she was drifting down a stream too heavy for her, was on her; and every now and then, a thrill of pride. Hilliard might not talk to anyone but Zélie, but all the same he could not help seeing there were people who cared to talk to Saint Gillespie. And she caught her breath as if something hurt her.

There was a step outside; Mrs. Barrington, like lightning, changed her attitude and her smile; and the door opened on Hilliard, dripping from the downpour. But for once he did not make for her.

There was an odd look of excitement on his face, that stayed there while the whole company chaffed him about being drowned out, and afraid to stay by himself, and deepened when at last he and Tom Standish drifted into a corner. By and by the two went out and Mrs. Barrington, curling herself more comfortably in her chair, smiled.

Nothing but good business ever made a man's face like that. It was the oil. She held back with her eyes young Bruce, who would have followed them, and Mr. Potter saw her do it.

He had been very wise; he had never

made Saint afraid of him, after that one sentence he had needed to rouse her against Hilliard. She was grateful to him to-night when Hilliard vanished as quickly as he had come with two perfunctory words and no look for her; she let him sit by her and hardly noticed what he said, only the sense of it. He loved her and she needed it; and he was like a screen between her and Zélie Barrington's triumphant eyes.

Mr. Potter was never more successful in his life than during the next few days, nor ever worked harder to be so. It was he, after all, who had put off the move to Indian Gardens; for, though the weather cleared, Gillespie would not stir. He told Annette Hilliard had business, and he was going to wait for him; and Mrs. Barrington hugged herself when it sieved through Annette to her. He was hurrying, and she knew the spur. She also knew contemptuously that Potter hardly spoke to her, and, more contemptuously, did not care. She was beyond Potters. It was true Hilliard had said nothing, but he would not till he was sure; he was not the kind.

She best knew what reason she had for it, but she grew a little more insolently sure of him every day; she fairly stretched herself, as a cat does, as she waited for her chance to pounce on the one thing she wanted. For of course Hilliard's business meant her; for a man who had lost her, for want of money, it could mean nothing else. She had not cared about him particularly while she had him; but she cared now.

Mr. Hilliard himself was not sure whether he was on his head or his heels. He was all the time at home, going over every inch of ground round the Inn of the Long Year, with varying emotions. When at last they came to a head he surveyed the sullen glare of his light and made up his mind. He repaired to Gillespie's, by his back way, on a fine morning; and as he came out on the little clearing where he had paid his first visit to Saint, stood stock-still.

She stood there, too, straight and tall in her corduroys, her bare head a crown of gold in the sun. The two stood and



looked at each other, both unconscious, both taken aback. And in the flame of the morning his eyes were the eyes of the man who had said the moon path led to him. She made a quick step towards him. There was something, she knew, that perhaps meant nothing to him and perhaps everything; whether he had talked about her or not, she would tell him. For against every bit of herself he was still the only soul in the world—who mattered. And her heart stopped as if there were a knife in it.

Every trace of pleasure had been wiped off his face as with a sponge. It was harder, more scornful, than she had ever dreamed it could be. The joy in his eyes had not been for her. He took off his cap and turned sharply away, to a path that led to the house by a long circle. He would not even stop to speak to her. And as she knew it, she knew, too, that he was not alone. He had stepped back into the bushes and checked some one who followed him, with a motion of his hand. Whoever it was, man or woman, turned as he bade them, she heard the rustle of their passage; but she had no curiosity in the matter. She could have killed herself for that step forward. At a movement in the path behind her she looked up, dully, to see Mr. Potter at her side; and did not even wonder how long he had been there, nor how he had found her. But he should not think she had been waiting for Hilliard, who had fled at the very sight of her. She turned to him with a piece of news. It was confidential, and she had no right to betray it, perhaps, but it had been thrown at her, and she hardly knew why. She had not been a dangerous rival, yet it was as to a vanquished rival that Zélie had spoken, half in implication, half outright. Saint repeated her words in self protection now.

"Do you know Mrs. Barrington is going to be married?"

"Yes," said Potter. He smiled, unconcerned, holding tight to a telegram in his pocket.

"She's really going to marry Mr. Hilliard;" the manner would not have dis-

graced Zélie herself. "But I have rather an idea I was not to tell."

"It's only me," returned Potter, comfortably, "and I guessed it. Does it mean there won't be any Indian Gardens?"

Saint flinched.

"Oh, no!" she said, lightly. "Frank's all ready. We're only waiting for this mysterious business of Mr. Hilliard's." She did not care what it was now.

"Yes," said Potter, thoughtfully. That would mean three days. The strain was nearly breaking him, and three days more—but he smiled again. "I don't call the prospective bridegroom too attentive. He hasn't been here since Monday."

It was on Saint's lips to say he was going to the house now, circuitously, and behind them, but something stopped her. She looked at Potter, and saw he was in earnest; he had not seen Hilliard. And since he had not it was none of his business. And then something like a thunderclap put it out of her head.

Mr. Potter, slowly, very gently, was asking her to marry him. Asking Saint Gillespie, who had been thrown at any one's head, and generally thrown back again.

## CHAPTER XI.

"It's—what?" said Mrs. Barrington; her lips were dry. She stood looking at the world as if it were Martinique, and falling to pieces around her. She had got up early, dressed herself with care and confidence, to go to Indian Gardens and to hear Jimmy Hilliard say once more that he loved her. And she was getting this. She stood trying to remember exactly what she had said to him, and could not do it.

Hilliard, very pale and hard-looking, stared about him before he answered her. She had said more than she knew, and in the middle of it he was certain he had seen a brown dress flash past behind the bushes that separated them from the path. But if he had it was gone, as it always was gone when he wanted Saint.

"It's pretty hopeless, but it's true; I don't think of anybody else. I thought you were hard on me, this summer, but you knew best. I wasn't the sort for you. I don't believe I'm really the sort for anybody, but I suppose I can try it."

Zélie got herself together.

"You've known her rather well—for a long time!" she said. She could not help it.

"That was pure gossip," angrily. "She never looked at me. I never knew her at all till I came here, and—I rather think she hates me. I don't know why I'm telling you." But she knew he did.

"It's a little late," she could barely speak from rage. "I—I am not blind," she began to laugh on a queer note. "It's so amusing. You, and—forgive me—bread and butter, prepared by Clara Vyse!"

She turned away from him and stood staring at the woods, many colored under a gray sky. She had dressed herself to match them, to have him tell her so; and now all she had to give her pleasure was that she had not asked him point blank to take her back. She had nearly done it; she had just stopped it on her lips that he might speak for himself first—and he certainly had. She laughed again, and not prettily. All those things she had carefully confided to the bread and butter lady might tell against him now.

"Try your luck," she advised, with soft venom; for the sooner he did it the better. Those things had not been likely to fade to an angry girl. But all her beauty was gone from her as he went away from her. The rest of the party were in plain sight, standing round the canoes for the long put off departure to Indian Point. She looked at them to get her mind on something that would keep her mouth from going crooked with fury. She dared not join the other women till her breath stopped coming in jerks; and she found herself looking at Tom Standish as if she were hypnotized. Was all the world gone mad, that a stout man should be capering in the dry bushes, waving a telegram and yelling? She moved, unnoticed, a little nearer.

Even Gillespie, frantic at taking so large a party into bad country where he did not want to go, and wild because he was short of guides, turned to look at Standish.

"I'm merely hugging myself," howled that gentleman, and every word came clear to the lady who was looking for distraction. "Laura, don't think of publicity; come and help me. You were right, my angel; Thomson's companies have gone down about sixty points, and we got out right at the top. Metal and Glue, both gone. Now," with virtue, "perhaps you won't fuss so about your missing man, Frank! I sent him in for wires. He's here."

Stocks were as naught to Gillespie; he stared with grudging interest.

"Played out and hungry from a forty mile tramp," he growled. "But there—I suppose you idiots think it's worth it! You always had the luck of the devil, Standish."

"It's Laura's luck," Standish returned, modestly. "She—er—proposed it, till there wasn't any peace. Now, if I had a drink," suggestively, "I'd stop blocking the traffic."

"You'll drink your flask and lake water," retorted Gillespie, callously; "we've waited for you long enough. For goodness' sake, get into the canoe, and let's get off. And mind you," trenchantly, "you and Mrs. Standish and Bruce and Webster go in the big canoe with the two Indians, and don't for Heaven's sake any of you leave the path. I'll bring Annette and the pack canoe after you. And please the pigs," he added, under his breath, "I get the whole lot of idiots back again before my hair's gray!"

Mrs. Barrington made a sharp step forward and got no farther. She stood listening with a strange aloofness that suddenly turned to a rigid terror. What was Standish saying—what had he said?

"You're only leaving four people behind you, Frank. And that reminds me!—I've a wire for Potter, and one for Mrs. Barrington. Where is she?"

Potter held out his hand.

"I think she's just coming. I'll take

it to her," he offered, smoothly. He moved away from Saint's side to the exquisite person in red cloth and fur of whom he had been acutely conscious ever since Standish had bawled out his rapture.

"A wire for you," he said, politely; he did not even need to look at her face. Instead he read his own dispatch. It was all right, like everything else this October morning. His deal was signed; Hilliard was bare of everything but the mere value of some forest lands, and he had—everything. Through his thoughts he waited for Zélie's voice, in a kind of bitter rapture. He knew what was coming; he was not Alonzo Potter for nothing.

"It's true!" she said, chokily. "Metal's gone, and Glue. And he—he wants margins!"

Potter stared at her white face.

"My dear lady," he said, slowly, "you don't mean you—why, I advised your selling both those before you came out here."

"I didn't," she looked at him with blank eyes. "I thought— What am I to do?"

"I don't know," returned Mr. Potter. "Better let go, I should say." Two months ago it would have been his responsibility, his pleasure, to know what she should do; to-day he despondingly shrugged his shoulders, and turned away.

Zélie stood alone against the bushes, and caught at them with both hands. She was ruined—on top of the bitterest half hour she had ever spent in her life. If she had been sick with checked weeping when Hilliard left her, she was over tears now. She must do something. She looked straight ahead of her to the canoes, and saw Hilliard with the Gillespie girl, as she had known she would see him. Hilliard, young, gray-eyed, straight and strong, who had oil wells. It was more bitter than death to remember that she might have had them, too. Mr. Potter, returning from the house with his flask that he had forgotten, stood in cynical interest, and watched the three.

If his hearing had been quicker he

might not have stopped to do it. Hilliard, with a perfectly expressionless face, had touched Saint's arm.

"We can't start out for the old place like this! Won't you let me speak to you? I want"—he stumbled a little—"to tell you something before we go."

Saint did not so much as turn her head.

"I think I know it," she said, quite placidly. "I congratulate you. I hope I am the first. And I'm to be married, too—to Mr. Potter."

"What?" said Hilliard, to her manner, not the words; for he might have known it.

And it was that moment Mrs. Barrington chose to come over to them, calling to Potter to hurry. They were late; would be miles behind the others.

It was curious that she neither knew nor cared what was written on Hilliard's face. It was Potter her eyes were on, Potter who must save her—and was idling on the bank with the girl who had ruined her plans.

Jimmy Hilliard, paddling bow, knew that he was doing it because the smooth water swirled and slipped by him. He was not quick with women; he had not seen how Zélie had managed him till this morning, when it was too late. It struck him as rampant injustice that of all people in the world they four should be packed into one canoe, going off on a party of pleasure that must walk unavoidably two and two; he and Zélie, whom he had just told delicately that he loved another woman, and that woman and Potter. But his bearing told no tales even to Potter.

They had a three hours' paddle, crossing to his side of the lake, but west, not east where his house lay; and they had a hundred delays. The canoe leaked on Zélie's feet, and had to be stopped with rag and soap; the Indian broke his paddle, and spliced it leisurely; Hilliard gave up hurrying in a stagnant despair. As he had known they would be, the others had landed and were out of sight by the time they beached their canoe in the little sandy bay he had loved before things had begun to happen. He lingered there, helping the Indian to pack

his load, and was not surprised when the others went on. Saint knew the way as well as he did; and it sickened him to remember they had learned it together.

It sickened her, too, as she hurried on with Potter at her heels. Zélie, who never hurried, trailed behind them. The path was plain enough here, even when they slipped out of sight in front of her, but it was only luck that made her follow it. She was blind with terror that she had lost Potter for Hilliard—and for nothing.

"I'll do it yet," she said to herself, wildly; and she got on a little faster. Somehow it must be she who walked through the woods with Potter, not that girl. She stopped deliberately, put her little sable coat down on the path, and went on without it.

Potter, at that very instant, stopped, too. The path branched in three where he stood, at a small clear space where they were in full view. He knew to an inch how far Zélie was behind them.

"Don't hurry so!" he said, with a laugh. He caught Saint by the elbows from behind. "Give me a kiss."

The tone, the manner were a revelation to her after the carefully reverent ones he had used till now. They set a match to, a temper she had not known she possessed.

"Let me go," she said, fiercely. "Do you hear me? Let me go!" How dared he, with the others close behind them? If she died for it, he should not kiss her before Hilliard. "If you kiss me I'll never marry you."

"You won't what?" said Potter, roughly. He faced her round to him with unexpected strength, and she saw he was laughing. "Look here," he said, "you don't like Hilliard?"

The too relevant question startled her out of all sense.

"I don't know—I don't care!" she cried, furiously. "Why?"

"Well, you hadn't much reason to, you know," he said, coarsely. "And thanks to you, and your showing me that light of his he'll never amount to anything now. I've been keeping it for a surprise for you. I've bought up his

property for nothing at all, considering what's on it, and in a month he'll be grinding his teeth over it. You showed me the oil there."

"I?" She was suddenly quite still. "I?"

"That's about the size of it! You've put him out and me in. Couldn't have done it without you. I'm going to give you the biggest diamond you ever saw for it, when we're married."

"Married!" repeated the girl, in a queer whisper. She felt sick as she saw his unguarded eyes. So he had not cared either; she had been a tool, a means to an end. She struggled wildly to get away from him. "I won't, I won't marry you!" she panted.

"We'll see," said Mr. Potter. Whether he loved her or not he meant to keep her as she stood just now; Zélie was close behind him. "You'll do exactly what I please," he said, hardly; and kissed her by force on her lips.

Mrs. Barrington's voice, imminent, deadly clear, cut the struggling silence.

"So sorry to—interrupt!" she drawled, and Potter's heart leaped at the undertone of it. "I'm so tired I can't go back, and I've lost—" she was really breathless as she paused, "my sable coat."

## CHAPTER XII.

"Your coat?" stammered Saint. With an unspeakable revulsion she found herself free. "I—I'll go back for it." And it was not Potter's kisses, nor Zélie's stare, that made her feel stunned as she went. She never looked at either of their faces as she turned down the path she had come by, or she might have seen that neither of them even saw her go.

"So you kiss her!" said Zélie, before she was out of sight. "I—does it amuse you?"

"I'm going to marry her," corrected Potter. His time had come for the last half of Zélie's payment.

Mrs. Barrington flung out something utterly indistinguishable. She sank down on a convenient stone as if her

when we have sat at this table and looked into each other's eyes over our wineglasses. Why is it?"

"Just what I say! Very evidently, by your own showing—it is dinner that makes the difference. Not in the woods you say, not in the garden, not with books, not on the sea—not anywhere but at dinner. *Ergo*, the only possible explanation is—dinner."

"I am inclined to think you are right," said I, "if only you will give the term dinner an inclusive significance, and not ascribe the whole miracle to the cooking."

"The cooking has much to do with it, I am convinced," persisted the Sphinx, looking more radiantly spiritual than I ever saw her look before. "It is so good that its part in the process passes to some extent unnoticed—though I trust the excellence of these mushrooms is not lost upon you. Were the *chef* to be changed for the worse, I'm not so sure you would find that harmony you speak of."

"Then I have owed more to the *chef* than I have ever realized," said I, raising my glass to her, and making that salute to her eyes which, however gay our mood, has always a curiously grave, almost sacramental quality. "Still," I continued presently, "I am not entirely convinced. Your argument has a negative force, I admit. Bad cooking, like any other extraneous annoyance, might, of course, distract us a little, and so superficially interrupt our harmony; but it is one thing to admit that, and another to say that it follows because bad cooking might destroy our harmony, good cooking therefore makes it. No, I am convinced that the miracle comes of a conflux of pleasant influences—good food and wine being amongst them which never entirely meet together except at the dinner-table hour. First of all, the day is over. Its work is behind us. Its anxiety is locked up for the day. We meet the good hour in an attitude of gayety, and we meet it in an atmosphere of other gay people who have come to meet it in the same spirit. Then we meet it refreshed by the lustration of the evening toilette, and ar-

rayed with regard to the pleasure of the eyes we especially aim to please."

"Are they pleased to-night?" interrupted the Sphinx.

"Are they?" I rejoined. Then I continued my grave discourse: "As I said, we are all free and gay and beautiful and our faces set on pleasure. Then there is the music, the scarce-noted scents and the delicate shapes and colors of flowers, the prismatic glitter of glass, and the exhilarating, snowy whiteness of the table linen."

"Dave's beaming smile," added the Sphinx, referring to our waiter.

"Yes, calling up immediately all the happy dinners we have had at his table. If we were to meet him elsewhere in years to come, how his face would flash these evenings back to us! I believe I could count up the times we have been here by the wrinkles of kindness on his face."

"I wonder if he really cares about us," said the Sphinx, wistfully, watching Dave as he expertly dismembered a roast duck at a side table.

Presently the excellence of the duck turned her thoughts back again to our argument.

"Say what you will, with your conflux of pleasant influences," she resumed, "roast duck is the real explanation."

"Who would take you for such a materialist," said I, "to look at you there, so radiantly delicate, so shiningly spirituelle?"

"Roast duck," laughed the Sphinx, "my *spirituelle* expression comes entirely of roast duck, believe me."

I could almost believe her in that moment.

"Materialist yourself!" she retorted presently. "You will force me to turn metaphysician and expound to you the mysticism of gastronomy."

"The metaphysics of duck!" I interjected.

"Precisely."

"Proceed, then," said I, and was silent.

"Well," she began, "I am perfectly serious. It is you that are the materi-

alist, not I, for the reason that the familiarity of the process of eating blinds you to its essentially mysterious nature; that process of transmutation, of gastronomic alchemy, by which food is changed into genius and beauty, and the kitchen seen to be the power house of the soul. After all, my gastronomic theory of the soul is merely one side of the same mystery which we see illustrated every day on another side by the doctor and the chemist. When we take a dose of medicine to tonic our nerves, we don't laugh skeptically, or even give a thought to the wonder of its operation. Yet surely it is mystery itself that distillations from plants, and tinctures drawn from stones, should hold for us the keys of life and death, and exalt or depress our immortal spirits. Have you ever thought on the marvel that an almost infinitesimal quality of certain juices distilled from some innocent-faced meadow-flower, a mere dewdrop of harmless looking liquid, can shatter our life out of us like a charge of dynamite?"

"A little more duck, m'm?" intervened Dave.

"The dynamics of duck," I whispered gently. "Go on."

"Well," continued the Sphinx, laughing bravely "the operation of food is exactly the same in its nature as the operation of medicines and poisons. For some unexplained reason, medicines and poisons influence us in certain ways. We don't know how or why, we only

know that they do. The influence of wine again is a part of the same mysterious process. Why should this Rudesheimer affect us differently from this water? Any one unfamiliar with the difference between wine and water would say it was absurd. But it is true for all that—and if you admit the influence of wine, and the influence of various other foreign substances, animal, vegetable and mineral on the human organism, in the form of medicines, stimulants, poisons and such like, you cannot logically deny the possible influence, say, of duck. Therefore, I contend once more that the harmony between us of which you spoke is a music first composed in the kitchen, transferred to notation on the menu, and finally performed by us in a skillful duet of digestion.

"Again," added the Sphinx hastily, as I was preparing to make some comment.

"Again, you know that the intimate connection between supper and dreams is a scientific fact. If supper produces nightmares, why shouldn't lunch and dinner produce daydreams!"

"I surrender unconditionally to that," I laughed; "you have won. We owe it all to the *chef*. We are but notes in his music—'helpless pieces of the game he plays!'"

"A little more duck, sir?" intervened Dave, once more.

"Yes, Dave, I will," said I, with emphasis.



## MEMORY

I SEE you now smile down on all the rout,  
Forgetful still of old enraptured years.  
They think you theirs, but I can know no doubt—  
They have your smiles, but I have had your tears.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



# STORIES OF THE STREET

## III.—THE LADY OR THE DIVIDENDS

By James H. Gannon, Jr.

THE stock market had been for weeks in the listless grip of the doldrums. Like a great ship abandoned by the winds, it had swung idly here and there, pointing lazily now up, now down, the mammoth, helpless sport of toying, many-minded zephyrs.

And so it might have rested, inert and unheeded, for other weeks uncounted, had not Mrs. J. Grant Wells, in the seclusion of her boudoir, become possessed of the desire of a parterre box for the approaching opera season.

Nothing, it would seem, could be more remotely involved with the ponderous machinery of the Street than this altogether natural desire. The lady herself would certainly have been the last to have associated them, and, it is but simple justice to add, from the prologue on through the subsequent chapters of the opera box epic—in which at times it may be seen how perilously dear a parterre box may be—unto the very end, which was the "first night," the Street to her was, like the primrose to another, the Street—and nothing more.

It was inconceivably more, in the interim, to President Wells, of the Twelfth National Bank; it was unquestionably more to two of his intimate friends, directors with him in a score of enterprises. To Joseph W. Barr, who dictated certain not unimportant parts of the epic, it was, by his proper voice, a Joke—and Something Substantial on the Side.

From boudoir time to dinner time Mrs. Wells bore alone the weight of the now well-matured desire. With the coffee, however, came the strategic mo-

ment for the economical division of labor.

With a careless display of the slender hand and well-rounded arm, of which Mr. Wells was justly proud, she moved a bit one of the soft-shaded silver candlesticks. The maneuver opened a white-paved little alley across the board—a cozy invitation to confidences. Mr. Wells smiled understandingly down it, meeting the lady's smile just his side of halfway.

"I've been thinking, Grant," said the lady, with pretty hesitation.

"You have?" said Mr. Wells, balancing the fragile cup to enjoy the aroma of the mocha. He smiled his disbelief.

"Why shouldn't we—just you and I—have a box at the opera this season?"

"Ah," said Mr. Wells, with no particular inflection, "why shouldn't we?" The cup tinkled as it touched the saucer.

"I am so glad you're nice about it, Grant." There was the least trace of haste in this. "You always are so nice about these things; I am sure I know no one who is so thoughtful. We'll make it my Christmas gift, won't we? None could give me more pleasure, and, best of all, I can share it with you. Of course, we couldn't use the box on Saturdays—the popular performances, you know—and that makes it cost ever so little. And then we can entertain so nicely. It is really economy; fewer dinners and receptions, you know. I am so glad to have thought of it—and so proud you approve; I knew you would, Grant—dear."

Confusing—blinding—smiles and in-

tonations tumbled tumultuously down the white-paved alley, and, gripping Mr. Wells, bound him, hand and foot, Lili-put like, and returned him captive to the lady.

"Of course," he capitulated, unconditionally.

President Wells, of the Twelfth National Bank, never speculated. It was a matter of much pride to him that the Twelfth National and its president should enjoy in common a substantial reputation for conservatism which was at once the envy and despair of competitors.

Nor did Mr. Wells speculate in the accepted sense of that much-abused word. Even in the old days, when his neighbors "up State," ignorant of the heights to which he should later attain, hailed him as "Josh," it was generally conceded that his local operations partook very little of the nature of speculation.

Did he but buy the apple crop of a hard-pressed farmer, even while the June breezes were still scattering the sweet-scented blossoms through the orchard, with the fall there were groaning trees which must be propped, lest their burthen of fruit crush them. Hay, oats, corn, wheat, cattle, the very bees of his native county, all thrive if Joshua Wells committed his fortunes to their well-being. Let him be pessimistic and venture not his gold abroad, and the elements hastened to range themselves on his side; the crops withered, kine died, and the bees abandoned their hives. It was never speculation.

To the larger school of finance he carried his gains and formulæ, and as the latter were exact the former found increase. Mr. Wells found recognition and, with the coming of Mrs. J. Grant Wells, a real liking for the many finer manifestations of living.

The matter of the opera box was, therefore, rather much in Mr. Wells' mind when he reached his bank the following morning. It would have been a simple thing to have drawn his personal check for the few thousands needed and for-

warded this with his application for the box to the management which weighs applications so scrupulously.

There were two objections, however, to this course. The first, that President Wells ever made haste slowly, and the second, that Mr. Wells had an invariable rule that current expenses should be met from current income—not from reserves. And, as Mrs. Wells had said, an opera box might well be reckoned as a matter of current expense.

In the foyer of the Lawyers' Club, where he always took his noon lunch, Mr. Wells met Ledyard Newton and John R. Austin, fellow directors with him on several boards, and the three men sought a table that they might lunch together. Austin was the senior member of a firm of big corporation lawyers and counsel to many railroads, including the Colorado Central, of which Newton, who was a man of wealth, performed the official functions of vice-president from the pleasant distance separating New York from Denver. The three men were among the heaviest stockholders of the road, and all were on the board of directors.

From the market and its aimless gyrations the talk turned at last to the various properties in which all were interested.

"How is Colorado Central coming on?" Austin asked of Newton. "I haven't heard much of it of late."

"You keep your eye on our little Central, Austin," said Newton, who was a crisp little man, fond of the good things of life. "Don't you get short of the stock. You might have to pay a pretty penny to get it back."

Mr. Wells, whose attention up to this time had been about equally divided between the conversation and the opera box, sat up.

"Finding nuggets mixed in with the ballast along the line?" Austin demanded, laughing.

"Not yet. That'll come later," retorted Newton, cheerfully. "Too busy catching up to our traffic now to stop for gold."

"Traffic got a long start on you, I suppose," said Austin. "I wish you'd catch

it or run over it. I'd get either dividends or legal fees then."

"You'll get the dividends first."

"That doesn't sound speculative," Mr. Wells interrupted the banter.

"Isn't that like Wells, now?" asked Newton, nodding to Austin. "No speculation for him or the Twelfth National. But, really," he added, "I'm serious in all this. Here, I'll send over to my office for the estimate of earnings they've just sent on from Denver."

"It's just as I told you about the traffic," Newton went on, as the three lighted their cigars and settled back to await the messenger's return. "Two big smelters have just been put in operation on the Midvale branch; our extension to the Central Steel Company's plant is returning us our share of business, and, best of all, the new link of the Western Colorado—it meets us at Silver City—is turning over a big volume of paying traffic. If our operating men can hold down expenses according to estimate we ought to declare a two per cent. dividend at the meeting next month. It will be the first, but it oughtn't to be the last, with our small capitalization of \$20,000,000. A two per cent. dividend will call for only \$400,000, and the net earnings for the last three months and estimates for this and next month run away over that. Here are the estimates. You can see for yourselves." Newton took the papers from the messenger and passed them to Mr. Wells and Austin.

The three men scanned the figures for some minutes. Mr. Wells found the stub of a pencil in a pocket and covered the menu card with a jumble of ciphers. They probably conformed to his formulae, for he smiled softly. He passed the menu card to Austin.

"What do you think of that?" he asked.

The lawyer glanced at the last characters on the card.

"Why, '40+15 on 2 per cent. div.,'" he read aloud, slowly. "Ah, I see. Colorado's at 40 now. You think it ought to go up fifteen points on the dividend?"

"And some judicious assistance," added Mr. Wells. "It would be justified

in this instance, since there are really to be dividends."

"And the assistance to come from a little pool of three, eh?" commented Newton, nudging Mr. Wells gently. "But it's justifiable in this instance—and it's not a speculation."

"Eh, what's this?" added Newton, who had picked up the menu card. "Something you overlooked, Austin. O-P-E-R-A B-O-X—\$25,000; opera box—"

"Yes," confessed Mr. Wells, laughing. "An opera box for the season and a few accessories—gowns, etc."

"There go your profits," said Newton. "Mine will go thus"—and he wrote, "Little Old New York," and dittoed the \$25,000.

"Now, Austin?" Newton pushed the card to the lawyer, who scribbled: "First catch your—ditto."

"Bird of ill-omen!" stormed Newton. "I'll keep the card to shame you later."

But the stiff card missed the pocket and fluttered quietly to the floor, where it lay unseen.

The pool was formed, and the check, which Mr. Wells might have sent quite simply to the opera house management, went to the pool's manager, Austin, who seemed less likely to appear involved in the market movements of Colorado Central than Newton, its vice-president. Mr. Wells, of course, never managed pools.

The campaign as planned contained no complex details. The intention was to accumulate Colorado Central stock and then to move it up, trading in and out on the way up, so that the entire line might be disposed of at an average advance over 40, the ruling price, sufficient to give the three members profits of \$25,000 each. An average advance of five points on 20,000 shares would allow this profit after expenses.

The operations in the market, including the necessary buying and selling of Colorado Central, were intrusted to Warren Hazlitt, of the Stock Exchange house of Hazlitt & Greene, through whom Austin usually traded.

Hazlitt's first move, with the full approval of the little pool, was to put Col-

orado Central down a few points by apparent free selling, in order that his line of stock might be accumulated as near 40 as possible. The decline attracted little attention in the dull market, and it was not until it touched 44 on the upward swing that the trading in it became at all animated. Here Hazlitt encountered such free selling of the stock that in order to keep it from breaking he was compelled to buy largely.

This selling was reported to the pool as perfectly natural profit taking, and a request made for more funds to offset the calls on the broker.

Mr. Wells drew another personal check, and another stub in the little leather-bound check book declared, "account op. box—current exp.," although there was, as yet, no corresponding credit entry on the books of the opera house management.

"Mr. Barr down yet, William?"

"Yes, sir," said the attendant of Willis, Barr & Co., taking the suit case and bag of golf sticks which Marshall, the office manager, handed over to him. "He's here and whistlin' these fifteen minutes."

Marshall found the little man buried in a tangle of morning newspapers. He looked up.

"Hullo, John," he said, cheerfully. "I'm trying to get the news of the world in fifteen minutes. Any news with you?" he added, as his glance rested on the young man's face.

"If it were anyone but you," answered Marshall, "I should say 'yes.'"

"Let's try it, anyway," said Barr, with pretended condescension.

"You've noticed how Colorado Central's been acting?"

"Yes," assented Barr, shortly.

"I played golf at Shinnecock Hills yesterday with young Van Dusen, of Hartridge & Co., and the pair ahead of us in the morning round was John R. Austin and Hazlitt, of Hazlitt & Greene. Hazlitt's an awful duffer at the game. I thought you might like to know," added Marshall, as Barr smiled.

"Which game?" asked the little man.

"Either. Colorado Central or golf." "Good," laughed Barr. "That's what I thought last week when I sold 4,000 shares of Central at 42."

"There it is," said Marshall, with mock disgust. "I said it wouldn't be news to you, anyway."

"All I had was suspicions, John. You've confirmed them now. I've been looking Central up a bit, and I guess I'm on to the game. They tell me from Chicago that the road's earnings may justify dividends next month—if nothing happens—and I guess Austin and some of the other directors are moving the stock up on that. But so many things may happen, John," added the little man, plaintively. "It is sad to think of it, but here below we must. Remember how unexpectedly Bowman lost the St. Louis Southern? How unexpectedly Mr. Morton Rogers lost his daughter? You ought to remember that, since you found her."

"Yes," he went on, speculatively, "think what a strike on the lines of the Central would mean to earnings, with other strikes in the Central Steel Company and other industries along the road. Think of a loss of traffic exchange with the Western Colorado at Gold City; how earnings would dwindle and dividends move down the block? I'm a director of the Western, and we couldn't let it become involved in a strike through interchange of non-union handled freight with the Central—oh, no. I have met many walking delegates of the railroad unions—some of them are my good friends, John—and most of them were on the run to make trouble somewhere. *For all I know, one of them is hustling toward Denver now to spoil the fair prospects of the Central.* All these things have convinced me that there are elements of uncertainty in everything—even Colorado Central dividends—and, pessimist that I am, I have sold 4,000 of its stock and shall continue to sell it so long as the complaisant pool managed by Hazlitt—a duffer, you say—will buy it."

"If I make money out of it," he concluded, fetching a tremendous sigh, "I shall probably use it to establish a new

library belt—if Mr. Carnegie leaves me room."

The market, which had been so long inert, took unto itself life. Slowly and cautiously Hazlitt moved Colorado Central toward higher levels, and, encouraged by the apparent strength of this movement, other pools, long dormant, lifted their heads and their favorite stocks. Stimulated by this false activity, the public trooped into the market and lifted a share of the pools' burdens.

Even more slowly and cautiously toiled the little man spinning his web from his littered room in the offices of Willis, Barr & Co. Each day Colorado Central touched a higher figure, and each day Barr sold a little more of its stock to the unwitting Hazlitt. It came softly and melted into the pool's operations like hesitating snowflakes.

A week passed. It was Monday again, and on the floor of the Exchange the clang of the big gong which marked the day's end was sweet music to Hazlitt. All day he had followed the movements of Central, and he had seen a quiet and persistent selling of the stock which puzzled him. He finished a hurried lunch in the Luncheon Club of the Exchange and passed quickly to his office.

As the statements from the brokers who had handled his orders in Colorado Central came in he began to realize the extent of the day's selling. This meant profit or an open challenge to battle by some unknown power which meant to combat the rise in Central.

Before noon on Tuesday the question was answered. The mysterious selling was under way again. The most persistent buying by Hazlitt's brokers could not stop Central from breaking badly under the impact of the sales. It closed at 47 under the drive.

It was a thoroughly worried broker who met Austin that night at an uptown club.

"Some one is fighting this advance, Mr. Austin," declared Hazlitt, earnestly. "It is no one of small caliber, either. The selling to-day has been amazing. Are you sure of your position? Are

those dividends really in sight? It seems impossible that anyone knowing the road's prospects, as you have detailed them to me, would dare to fight us so openly."

"You know Mr. Newton. You saw the estimates he received?" Austin was plainly irritated. "I think they count for more than the swashbuckling play of some stock jobber. If one of that ilk chooses to set himself against us, well and good. He'll deserve his unpitied end."

"Yes," said the broker, "of course, you're right. But under the conditions we'll need more funds. We just about used up our past profits to-day keeping Central up."

"Don't worry about funds, Hazlitt," Austin said, rather sharply. "You'll get all you need. I know I can count on Newton, and—well, our little pool isn't to be derailed by any market gambler. You ought to make him pay dearly for his meddling when that dividend is declared."

Hazlitt laughed. "Depend on me. If you take care of the dividends I'll take care of the enemy."

And so the little pebble which a woman's hand had tossed, blindly, into the quiet waters of the market was sending its waves in an ever-widening circle to an unknown shore. The "little" Opera Box Pool had outstripped its diminutive. The untruthful stubs in Mr. Wells' little leather-bound check book multiplied monotonously.

The struggle began again on Wednesday. For the first time there began to circulate timid rumors that bad news, in the shape of strikes and loss of earnings, was soon to come out on Colorado Central.

On Thursday the lines of battle were so distinctly drawn that the Street held aloof from Central and watched the conflict from safe distances. The floor of the Exchange was a veritable battle ground, where back and fourth Hazlitt's brokers and those acting for the adversary waged the contest.

The strike rumors regarding Central became more aggressive, and late in the day a dispatch came over a private wire

from Denver saying that the Brotherhood of Trainmen would meet there on Saturday to discuss hour and wage grievances against the road. The stock fell sharply two points, to 45.

Newton had received a similar dispatch from the road's headquarters, which contained more details. It was something of a shock to Austin and Mr. Wells, who, with Hazlitt, had foregathered to take measures to protect the pool's interests.

"You can rely on Meneely's statements," declared Newton, taking the dispatch from Mr. Wells. "He's been the road's manager for years. He knows his men as a father knows his children, and when he says this trouble has been promoted from New York, he's right. You see, he says the president of the trainmen's association came on from Chicago on Tuesday and met the men's representatives last night. One of the men who attended that meeting said he heard that Chicago and New York stock operators would put up big money if the strike were brought about.

"But, even worse than that, Meneely reports that Western Colorado intimates that if the strike is declared it cannot afford to anger its men by interchanging traffic with us at Gold City. You can easily imagine what that means to our earnings."

"I should say the Western was almost suspiciously prompt in their ultimatum," said Mr. Wells, who had followed Newton's words closely. "When did they inform Meneely of their intended course?"

"That's a fact—let's see." Newton scanned the telegram. "This was sent at ten this morning; the men met last night. Why, these Western people must have had an inspiration."

Newton drew the telegram through his fingers in abstraction. The others watched him silently.

"I've got it," he broke out. "I've got it. It's an insult to your combined intelligence to tell you the truth. That Western has always been a stock-jobbing game, and one of its directors and big owners is the biggest stock jobber and the biggest 'gentleman of the road' in all the world—or Chicago."

"Barr," came three voices, in surprising unison.

"Barr—none," declared Newton.

Austin and Hazlitt laughed—a little. Mr. Wells smiled seriously.

"Well?" he queried, and there was a wealth of meaning in the intonation.

"That's it," assented Newton, grave again. "This little pool of ours is spreading nicely, isn't it? And such a harmless little pool, too, it was. Just an opera box, a trip to Europe and a cozy joy-time in New York—that's all it came into the world for, and now look at it—a young ocean, with the low, black, rakish craft of Barr afloat on its bosom."

"How much stock do you suppose Barr has sold, Hazlitt?" asked Newton, abruptly, of the broker.

"Hard to tell. Perhaps 30,000 shares. The selling has been heavy. Probably all for his account. *We had to take 20,000 shares more than we sold.*"

"Now, isn't that pleasant?" Newton nodded mockingly to Mr. Wells and Austin. "If a strike is declared, the stock will drop at least five points—\$150,000 presented with our compliments to Barr."

"How much did the 20,000 precious shares cost us, Hazlitt?" asked Newton again, very softly.

"They'll average 46½."

"There we are. Our profits are tied up in 20,000 shares of stock bought at 46½. Central closed to-night at 45, so we're out exactly \$30,000 as it stands. If we tried to sell ten shares it would break to 40, probably. It seems to me that we had better turn a little more money in to Hazlitt so he can support Barr's selling to-morrow. I'll telegraph Meneely to-night for a full report on the situation. When we get that we can decide whether we should abandon the movement at a loss or continue it at a possible—remotely possible—gain."

The others assented to this arrangement.

"You'll get my check in the morning, Hazlitt." There was a touch of weariness in Mr. Wells' voice.

"Mr. Barr, sir?" said the waiter. It



was noon of Friday, and in the Lawyers' Club.

Mr. Barr kept his eyes on the newspaper propped up against a carafe, but made a half circle with his busy fork in the waiter's direction.

"Thank you, sir," said the waiter, reading permission in the maneuver. "I thought you might like to know, sir, that President Wells, of the Twelfth National Bank, has had this table every noon for five years, rain or shine, sir."

Mr. Barr's glance flitted quickly from the print to the waiter's eyes. It came back as quickly, however, and the little man nodded his acknowledgment of the information.

"A curious man, sir, Mr. Wells. Always spoiling menu cards—with his figures, sir"—explained the unsmiling waiter as the little man looked up again.

"Worse than usual, sir, a few days ago, when he lunched here with some friends. He quite used up the back, sir, and ran down the front to the dessert—that might be owing some to his friends, sir, though; they figured a bit, too."

"I kept it for a memento—I've a weakness for mementos, sir. Would you care to see it? It is odd."

Perhaps the little man nodded. The figure-bespattered card came out of the pocket of the waiter's jacket and rested beside Mr. Barr's plate. He glanced at it, perfunctorily, and went on with his paper.

He finished at last. He put the card in his coat pocket, negligently, and arose. The still unsmiling waiter pulled down the tails of the little man's coat with his left hand and received a yellow-backed certificate with his right—graciously.

"Thank you, sir," he said, with the perfect composure of a well-bred waiter.

Entering his private office, Barr crossed over to the busy ticker. The tape carried to him the news of the battle on the floor of the Exchange. Big blocks of Colorado Central were coming out. Resistlessly their impact was beat-

ing down the defenses of Hazlitt. Fraction by fraction the struggle was going against him. The stock, which had opened at 45, had been borne back to 43½ by the incessant assaults. The cold figures told Barr of the stormy scenes under way on the floor.

He turned from the ticker with a smile. He swung himself up on the flat-topped desk and took from the pocket of his ulster the menu card. The silence of the room, as he read the mute record of three men's and one woman's hopes, was broken only by the clicking of the ticker, telling its epic of battle in this quiet place.

Five minutes passed. The little man turned half about and, still holding the card, picked up the desk 'phone.

"The floor," he said, tersely, as the office central queried.

"Willis," he said, again, as the telephone boy on the floor of the Exchange queried.

"You, John?" he asked, as his partner's voice came to him. "Stop selling Central. Tell Hazlitt to meet me at once up in the Luncheon Club of the Exchange. I'm telegraphing Denver."

"Correct. Good-by."

"Who is that funny little man, Grant, dear?" Mrs. Wells rested a shapely arm on the edge of the parterre box and pointed, discreetly, the lorgnette tip toward the orchestra seats.

"He's in the—one, two, three, four—fourth row—one, two, three, four, five—sixth seat from the center aisle."

Mr. Wells followed an imaginary line from the lorgnette tip. The line touched its goal.

"Oh," said Mr. Wells. "His name is Barr. He sometimes traffics in opera boxes, I believe."

"Ah," said the lady, negligently, "I thought you knew him. He looked up here and smiled a moment ago."

"Did he?" said Mr. Wells. "Ah, there's De Reszke."



## CUPID IN ANOTHER MOOD

By Cosmo Hamilton

IF, some days ago, you had happened upon a certain village in Sussex, and, attracted by the delightfully ruddy exterior of a certain Elizabethan manor-house, you had waived etiquette, unfastened the twenty-feet-high wrought-iron gate, wandered along the well-weeded drive, between intricately shaped yews, until you had come upon a certain window in the right wing of the house, and you had then planted your feet firmly upon a well-kept bed in which the white heads of a bevy of adventurous snowdrops told you the welcome fact that winter had begun to pack his cold trunks prior to leaving the country, you would have seen a picture of still life which, perhaps, would not have been quite devoid of interest to you.

You would have seen, seated in the most comfortable armchairs imaginable, before a great crackling fire of logs, two quite excellent specimens of Englishmen, short-haired, well-featured, athletically built. You would have noticed, assuming that you are a person with an observant eye—as, of course, you are—that the broader, more solid, better-looking man of the two, although apparently absorbed in a story, was holding the magazine which contained it upside down; and that the other man, although apparently deep in a treatise on polo, was, as a matter of fact, watching his friend with a look in his eyes of sympathy, curiosity, a certain impishness, and very evident amusement.

The background upon which this more or less commonplace picture would have been painted in your mind's eye certainly would have pleased you, assuming again that you are a person who

has a taste for engravings of exquisite landscapes, for rare etchings, for old prints, for dark, oak wainscoting, for bookshelves bulging with first editions, for pots of quaint design and delicate coloring, pewter pots, leather bottells, all arranged with the careful carelessness of a hand with a sense of effect. Exactly opposite the window, the upper panes composed of almost exactly matched bits of dark green bottle glass, through which you would have been looking if you are a person of sufficient unconventionality, you would have seen another window, and through this something more beautiful than the most beautiful engraving of any of Leader's landscapes. You would have seen, indeed, a Leader's landscape in flesh, if one may put it so. There were the leaden sky, the tall, leafless trees, holding out their naked arms in mute appeal to the pale March sun; the long road between them, with its ridges filled with rain, leading to a faint, cold, hazy line of horizon; the group of rooks dotting the sky like drops of ink on slate-colored paper.

The action of the elder man, with something between a yawn and a chuckle, banging his book down upon the table at his side, would have then, in all probability, driven you away from the window for fear of being caught in the act of peeping; and you would never have known, but for me, why it was that Archie McLeod performed the gymnastic feat of reading a story upside down, or why Teddy Russell watched him with a look in his eyes, of sympathy, curiosity, a certain impishness, and very evident amusement.

"Are you often taken like that?"

Archie McLeod blinked in a dazed way, as a man does who finds himself on earth, and not, as he had fondly imagined, in heaven.

"Taken like what?" he asked.

Russell, the optimistic pessimist, chuckled again.

"I suppose I should waste my breath, and tell you something you already know, if I were to remark upon the extraordinary habit you have lately developed of taking your literature upside down?"

McLeod looked in astonishment from Russell to his magazine and back again; laughed uneasily; dropped the telltale collection of topical rubbish; tried hard to assume an expression of callous indifference, and succeeded admirably in looking utterly foolish.

"Yes, old chap, you would," he said.

"Then why blush?" Teddy's voice would never have led you to suppose that inwardly he was shaking with laughter. "Don't get up," he added. "I'm going to speak to you like a father. When you honored my poor dwelling three weeks ago with your distinguished if somewhat too muscular presence, you were gay and breezy. Your laughter shook the cobwebs away from my too-contented mind. The lines at the corners of your mouth were set fair. More than that. You sang as you dipped your head into your morning tub. You hummed as you faced your correspondence. You whistled as you dressed for dinner; and, between times, you rode with a straight back; golfed with an utter absence of oath; strummed your rough ditties upon the nursery piano for my son and heir to imitate; told amusing and perfectly harmless chestnuts to my wife and sister over the soup; and strode through each day with a total abstinence of final 'g,' for all the world as though life were a game of tiddledewinks, or a song in which the words 'beer' and 'skittles' were the only ones that mattered."

Archie laughed a hollow laugh, and began slowly:

"My dear Teddy——"

"But"—continued the implacable Russell—"but since last Tuesday, when the Babblers ran over to stay from Al-

dershot, and took your place next to Effie at dinner, a gradual change has come over you, an imperceptible darkening. The kind of effect they work so well at the Lyceum before cardboard waves lash themselves in fury against plaster of Paris rocks, and King Lear plucks imitation daisies from the cracks in the stage."

Archie laughed again, and it was more hollow than before.

"My delightful and stupendous idiot——"

Russell held up one tantalizing finger.

"And," he added, treating Archie's remark as a kitten treats its mother between meals, with dignified indifference, "the consequence is that every one is asking me, behind your no longer cheerful back, 'What's the matter with Archie?' and although with cleverly assumed plausibility I give them the patented 'Arthurian reply, 'Oh, he's all right,' every one leaves me with the same look—a look which plainly says, 'You're another.' Even the son and heir is worried. I received an imperative command to wait upon his majesty in the nursery this very day: 'Teddy, Dad No. 1,' he said, with evident emotion, 'has Archie, Dad No. 2, hurt himself?'"

Archie didn't laugh this time. He simply said:

"Gad, what a rum little joker it is!"

Teddy, Dad No. 1, looked keenly at Archie, Dad No. 2. He also lifted one eyebrow slightly, drawing the thumb and forefinger of his left hand up and down the bridge of his nose. These were the signs that he was about to drive in his nail.

"My son," I politely said, 'Archie, Dad No. 2, hasn't hurt himself; but, if you will let me have your royal word as the master of this house not to give me away, I'll tell the true history of Archie's hurt. My son,' I said——"

"No, you didn't," said Archie.

"All right, then, I didn't." Teddy was superbly placid. "My son," I said—or not, just as you like—our mutual friend is in his present parlous state through a practical joke played upon him by a free-and-easy young gentleman about your own size, who never

wears anything to speak of except a quiver tied with pink ribbon, and who carries about, wherever he goes, a bow and plenty of arrows poisoned at the tip. Although he has been hovering about this neighborhood every day since Archie, Dad No. 2, came down—especially after the lights were lit—he has kept all his arrows in his quiver, and amused himself by merely poking Archie in the ribs with his bow. Of course, Archie felt queer every now and then—especially after the lights were lit—but, not understanding it, he went on being happy. However, my son,' I said—or not, old chap, just as you like—'on the night the Babblers arrived from Aldershot, this young gentleman about your own size saw his opportunity for a little sport; so he waited until Aunt Effie, in a new evening dress, was talking like fun to the grinning Babbler, and then went around the table until he faced Archie, Dad No. 2, strung his sharpest arrow, took careful aim, and, with a peal of laughter, let fly at Archie's immaculate shirt front. The arrow quivered in the starch for a second, pushed its way through, and went clean into the very plumb center of Archie's big-sized heart.'

Archie's face was very red, and Archie's voice was loud.

"What's all this beastly rot about, Teddy?" he said.

"All this beastly rot, Archie, Dad No. 2, old chap," said Teddy Russell, "is that you are in love with my wife's sister, Effie, and that I wish you luck."

McLeod sprang to his feet.

"Let me tell you this!" he yelled. "Your young friend with the quiver only shot one arrow—the one he potted at me. Now, it may be very good fun to watch a man beastly in love with a girl who doesn't care a tuppenny cuss about him; but it isn't any fun for the man, believe me."

Teddy arose also, and placed a soothing hand on Archie's agitated shoulder. "I know it isn't, old man; I know it isn't. But listen here. This is wisdom, for I know a thing or two. When a woman thinks a man is awfully in love with her, and that woman isn't in love

with any one else, all that man has got to do is to tell that woman he's awfully in love with her, and she'll be so pleased with herself at having guessed the truth that she'll straightway fall in love with him, and tell him so."

"Do you think so?" There was a great eagerness in Archie's voice.

"I know it," said Teddy. "Am I not a married man? Did I not— But that's neither here nor there. So, Archie, all you've got to do—the Babblers' not in the running—is to go at once to Effie, who's in love with no one; tell her roughly, and without trying to find the right word, that you adore, passionately adore, the very ground she walks on—that's always a safe thing to say—and that she must be ready to marry you by the end of the month."

"I haven't got the cheek," said Archie. "She'd only say: 'Don't talk blither!'"

Teddy chuckled.

"That's precisely what she will say—at first. But then you must begin all over again from the beginning, with variations. You must throw in a few such phrases as 'broken heart,' 'sending in your papers,' 'going to the dogs,' 'ruined life,' whereupon she'll begin to take a keen interest in you, because her vanity will be awfully tickled. Then on you'll go, piling word upon word, appeal upon appeal, horror upon horror, until from mere interest she'll feel pity, from mere pity sympathy, from mere sympathy a feeling that she might do worse, and from a mere feeling that she might do worse a certain conviction that she couldn't possibly do better. And then——" Teddy stopped, amazed at his wisdom.

"And then?" cried Archie.

"And then," said Teddy, gathering himself together, "you'll kiss her, and she'll go and tell my wife, and cry a little, and you'll come and smoke a pipe with me while I laugh quite a lot, and—and there's an end—or a beginning, but that's neither here nor there. Now, then, Effie is in the drawing-room alone. Go and get it off your chest. In the meantime, I'll load your pipe."

Archie staggered, and grew pale.

"My dear fellow, I couldn't do it."

"My dear fellow"—Teddy began to pull him toward the drawing-room—"you must do it."

"My dear fellow"—all Archie's strength had left him—"I could no more do it than fly!"

"My dear fellow"—Teddy still pulled—"nobody wants or expects a man of your weight to do anything so flighty. But you must and shall do it."

With that he opened the drawing-room door, gave Archie an enormous shove, sent him staggering into the room, shut the door quickly, and locked it.

Then he returned to his briar. And upon his face was the smile of a man who knows.

Everybody in his time has, on one special occasion, wished with the whole strength of his mind that he had never been born. Some men have wished it more than once; in fact, if they had taken up the civil service or the turf as a profession, quite a number of times. And most women spend the greater part of their lives in wishing they had never been born. At least, they say so, which is pretty much the same thing.

McLeod, Archie McLeod, Capt. Archibald Colquhoun Campbell McLeod, with various letters after it, of sorts, was a man with a keen sense of the ridiculous and an even keener sense of humor. Now these two useful and necessary senses have not, as some people ignorantly suppose, any relation to each other. For a man with a sense of the ridiculous is just an ordinary person who can see with enjoyment the absurdities of other people, while a man with a sense of humor is a person quite out of the ordinary, almost, indeed, unique, who can see with enjoyment the absurdities of himself.

Given simply these two senses, McLeod would have delighted in the position in which Teddy Russell had compulsorily placed him. He would have said to himself at once: "Gad, here I am in an absurd position. What a gorgeous ass I must be, to be sure!" But he was, unfortunately, cursed with

the additional sense of hating to do the wrong thing—a sense they breed and cultivate in the army; and, having that sense highly developed, he was only conscious of the fact that it was certainly the wrong thing for a man who loved a girl to be flung almost neck and crop, rumpled, disorganized, perhaps with his tie askew, into the room where that girl happened to be reading, or writing, or sleeping. Any idiot who is or was or will be in the service will tell you that. Wherefore, notwithstanding the possession of a keen sense of the ridiculous, and an even keener sense of humor, Archie McLeod wished, for the first time in his life, with the whole strength of his mind, that he had never been born.

And after that he began to look about him; and, having looked about him, somewhat sheepishly, as he knew, for some moments, he began to wish that he had *not* wished for the first time in his life, with the whole strength of his mind, that he had never been born, because he couldn't see any Effie.

She wasn't in the window seat curled up on the cushions, with the light running its fingers through her exquisite hair, and leaving streaks of golden fire behind them. She wasn't sitting on the cushion in the corner of the Dutch chimney, warming her almost ridiculously small shoes against the bars. She wasn't, as a matter of fact, anywhere to be seen. "Where on earth is she?" he said to himself, rapidly becoming peevish, "and why on earth isn't she here?" Of course he knew well enough that he would never have had the pluck to propose to her if she *had* been in the room; but, after all, you know, he would have liked to have had the opportunity of proposing to her, because, don't you see, you never *do* know, *do* you?

With superb self-control, and a large amount of disappointment, he moved farther into the room. The sofa was drawn up to the fire. He would sit there, and think things over once again.

The sofa had its back to him. It was, he thought, a most uncomfortable, wretched sofa, one of those purely ornamental sofas. . . . Good heavens!

He clutched at the back of it, with his face the color of the sun in a fog. An uncomfortable sofa! A wretched, ornamental sofa! By Jove! it was an adorable, an enviable sofa, the only sofa worth having in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, India, or Australia; to say nothing of the merely foreign places. It was a sofa he would like to purchase from the Russells with every penny he had, and travel with him wherever he might go.

She was in it, with her head among the cushions; she, Effie, asleep. . . . S-s-s-s-h! . . . Asleep.

He bent over her tenderly. How small she looked, he thought, more sheepishly than ever. How long her lashes were! Why, they stretched far on to her cheeks as though—as though they were trying to lean down and touch her lips. Why, she looked, lying so still among the cushions, as though—as though a gust of wind, if it came through the window, would take her up, and blow her away! By gad, you know, surely she wanted *some one* to look after her, and—and keep the windows closed! Oh, surely.

He left the sofa on tiptoe, crossed the room, flushing every time his weight made the boards creak, to a little table by the window, took all the photographs off, and flicked off the cover, a flimsy, high-art thing.

And then a strange thing happened. Effie, who was asleep—quite sound asleep, mind you!—raised her head quickly, looked at McLeod's great broad shoulders with eyes full of interest, curiosity and excitement; and, long before he returned and gently spread the green and yellow thing over her shoulders, was back in her place, her long lashes again gymnastically trying to lean down and touch her lips.

For a long moment Archie stood looking down at her. Then he gave a long sigh, and began, aloud, to give vent to thoughts which his brain evidently couldn't silently contain.

"By Jove!" he said, softly—softly for him, "you *are* a dream! I never saw any one like you before; and I'll bet a monkey I shall never see any one like

you again. As a rule, I can no more talk to you than fly. I can only sit and look at you, and gasp. It's a different story now that you can't hear me, though. . . . And yet it's almost a pity you're asleep, little woman, because I'm going to tell you something I shall never have the pluck to say again. . . . Good lor'! She's moving! No, it's all right. . . . I say, I'm in love with you from the soles of my feet to the thin spot on top of my head. By gad! I've said it. Oh, ho! ho! . . . What's more"—he bent nearer, red with suppressed love—"I think you're absolutely the most utter darling in this world! What's more, I should like to murder that Babblar man, and hang for it! . . . You've done for poor old Archie, my dear, although it doesn't matter to you. I can't smoke; I can't drink; I can't play billiards; I loath the sight of a horse; golf makes me shudder, and the kid upstairs thinks I've hurt myself. Hurt myself! Why, it's you who have done all the damage—you—you utter darling. However, little woman, don't you worry. I shan't ever have the pluck to tell you. Don't you see, it wouldn't be any good? I ain't the kind of man for you by a thousand miles. But I should just like to tell you, as you won't know anything about it, that I do love you, Effie. I do, my dear; by Jove, I do! Darling! . . . Darling! . . . Darling! Now I've said it to your face! Wouldn't you be in a fearful paddy if you could hear me, eh, what? But that's not all I'm going to say, now that you can't hear. . . . Sweetheart, will you be my wife?"

And then another strange thing happened. Effie opened her eyes, and sat up again. "Capt. McLeod," she said, in the most matter-of-fact manner, "if you will be so good as to throw another log on the fire, and draw up a chair for yourself, we will discuss things together."

One huge blush, and, looking like nothing so much as a schoolboy discovered by the headmaster stealing prize apples, Archie McLeod stood staring, unable to move, dazed, humbled and utterly ashamed.



"You *did* know that I was asleep, I suppose?" asked Effie, a little suspiciously.

Archie could only nod, breathing hard.

"I'm glad. But I may as well tell you at once that I wasn't. I heard every word you said."

Clutching eagerly at the few words that seemed to be left to him, Archie gasped:

"How can I— What am I— I'm most awfully——"

Effie laughed.

"Oh, don't apologize. I'm not altogether sure that I didn't thoroughly enjoy myself."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I—I mean that I'm sure I thoroughly enjoyed myself, because although you may not know it, you put it all so nicely."

"Nicely?"

"Yes, although perhaps 'nicely' is not quite the word. I mean, I have listened to quite a number of men who had the same thing to say, and therefore I'm really a bit of a judge. I willingly give the prize to you."

"Prize? What prize? Do you mean——"

Effie laughed again.

"I mean the prize for proposing. You were really quite refreshing."

Archie, surging with conflicting emotions, sprang to his feet. Effie held out both hands, warningly.

"Stay where you are," she said, quickly. "Only don't sit down again. Draw yourself up, and let me look at you. I haven't really looked at you before. . . . Why, you must be at least six foot two! Are you?"

"I am," said Archie, sulkily.

"And, good gracious me, you must be quite good-looking! Are you?"

"I am," said Archie. "I mean, I'm not—I—I— Oh, Miss Corbet, do let me go and drown myself."

But Effie was much too interested. As a matter of fact, Cupid had just crept up, and was straddling the back of the sofa. One of his arrows was being fitted to the bow.

"Gray eyes, straight nose, a beautiful

mustache"—she ran him over until he fancied he was dress fabric or new curtains—"very good teeth, a dear, firm chin." Cupid touched her arm with his bow. "Why—why, Capt. McLeod, do you know that you are absolutely, in every respect, my—my ideal of a man? . . . No! Stay where you are, and let me think."

"Think hard, Miss Corbet, please!" cried Archie, breathlessly.

Neither of them heard a boyish burst of laughter. But Archie could see a decided change in Effie—a softening, a nervousness, an uncertainty, a heightened color, a tendency to pluck at the chintz of the sofa.

"How long have you loved me?" she asked.

"Since the world began, a thousand years, a week—in fact, from the night the Babbler idiot came down and took my place by you. Since then my love has been like a snowball, growing larger and larger every day, until— How—ever, I'm only wasting your time. If you'll excuse me, I'll——" Very stiffly, very awkwardly, Archie turned toward the door.

Whereupon, with a gurgle of delight, the little demon who does more mischief in the world than runaway horses, colliding trains, storms of wind and rain, let fly his arrow.

"Capt. McLeod!" cried Effie, faintly, clapping her hand to the wound. He stopped. "Don't turn around. Stand there with your back to me. I—I want to know why you are going before you've had my answer to your question. Will you promise, on honor, that if I give you my answer, you won't look around for a quarter of an hour?"

"Yes," said Archie, trembling.

"Yes," said Effie, trembling too.

Whereupon, like a very sensible man, Archie McLeod broke his promise into a million little bits, and— But the rest is neither here nor there. All that you need know is that Cupid laid his dimpled hand on two heads at once, swung his bow over his bare, pink shoulder, and crept on tiptoe through the keyhole.

And here's an end—or a beginning.

# A GIFT FROM THE SEA

By Kate Masterson

## I.

IT was a chance through which I obtained the situation with the Graysons at Old Oaks, and a lucky one for me, as it has proved, after all, for I lay it all to the happenings that night that I am married now, which is a happier life than one has out to service, no matter how pleasant one's lady is.

Mac, he that is my husband now, had left his place as valet to Mr. Lloyd when he went for a cruise in his yacht, and Mac, not wishing to leave me, for the French market man was sweet on me at the time, took a place at the Oakland Country Club, and I, needing a change of air and tired of the town, which is dull enough out of the season, was hoping for the position of housekeeper at the club, through Mac's influence. It was then he wrote me that Mrs. Grayson's husband, who he had once worked for, had asked him if he knew of a good maid, for the French maid was going to leave, and there was a place all ready and waiting for me.

I went down to Oakland one rainy afternoon, and there was the trap to meet me, although it was only a few minutes' walk from the station. It was easy to see from that and what the man who drove me up said, that this place would be the kind I was used to—just the master and the mistress, with four outside men, not counting the stable helpers, a butler, a second man, a housekeeper, a cook and two parlor maids, besides myself.

There was a house party at Old Oaks, the name of the Graysons' place, over the week-end, but they were all out when I got there, the housekeeper told me,

except some men knocking balls around in the billiard room. The housekeeper, Mrs. Horan, a Scotchwoman, was a gracious soul, for it isn't always so easy to keep maids in the country.

She brought me up to my room, right off Mrs. Grayson's dressing room, with electric lights and a white bed as nice as you please. She ordered me a cup of tea, for I had lunch in town, and when I'd washed my face and rested a bit and changed my dress she brought me through the mistress' rooms.

One side of the dressing room was all mirror doors, and behind them hung the gowns. Then there was over a hundred toilet things in ivory and gold, and I was thankful that I knew the use of every one of them. The only new thing to me was the electric stove for heating curling irons or pressing out a sash or a bit of lace, without taking it downstairs.

It was the most beautiful place I'd ever been in, and I have seen some pretty rooms, but these were more like a scene at a theater, with the great French windows looking out on a little balcony, and for miles there was the country, a bit bleak, but beautiful, with the old trees, flecked with ice and snow, on each side of the carriage road leading to the house.

Mrs. Grayson's bedroom was done in delicate Nile green, the walls puffed out with silk, and the little sitting room was in moss green, an odd taste for a lady's rooms, which usually are in pink or blue. Green is more of a man's color, and I mentioned this, but Mrs. Horan, the housekeeper, said it was my lady's color, on account of her complexion, and that artists always put her in a green gown

when they painted her portraits, two of which I would see downstairs.

She showed me a painting over the mantel in the master's bedroom—a Rubens, she called it—which she said was as like the mistress as if it were her twin sister, although I couldn't see why, for the face was turned away, and, while I've grown used to these women in pictures with nothing on, this Rubens rather took my breath away, for it was so large and lifelike and pink as a baby that has had a bath that it frightened you. The name, which was French, meant, Mrs. Horan said, "A Gift from the Sea."

It was the body of a woman stretched out on the grayish-white sand—the face just turned, and the long, damp gold-red hair, drenched and dripping, strung out in a great snarl from the head, with the waves curling up green and foamy about the woman, shading like an emerald, and yet looking so like real water that you longed to touch it and make sure.

We stood looking at the picture, and the master was in the room before we knew it—a youngish-looking man, in a riding suit, with a hunting coat well becoming his pale, haughty face, with eyes black as night and hair sleek and blue-black as the wing of a bird. He looked to me like a man you'd read of in a book, he was so handsome, but I could see at a glance that he had a temper, and as he stood looking at us, cross-like, as though we had no right to be there, I noticed a case of swords shining on the wall back of him, and then it came to me somehow that he had French blood in him, and that was what made him so black and fierce-looking, young as he was.

Mrs. Horan brought me to Mrs. Grayson, who had just come in—as beautiful a woman as I ever saw, not a day under thirty, but one of those who look better as a woman than they ever did as a girl. She had a lot of red hair and a laughing, rosy mouth, pink cheeks and eyes blue as china. It was her color and life that took you, and she was quite kind and amiable—nothing haughty or domineering about her, but a lady who seemed quite sure of herself—a woman that en-

joyed everything and liked pleasure and did not take things too seriously.

She was a great contrast to her husband, with his proud, cold manner and his fiery eyes. He wasn't the sort that'd bother me chucking me under the chin or trying to kiss me in the hall, I could see that. Nor was his wife one of those that would want me to pry out his affairs through his valet, as many ladies do.

She asked for a dressing gown, and Mrs. Horan got one out, a beautiful white silk robe, and I helped her off with her riding habit and the little boots. She had a small foot, and she smiled when I said so, and curled her toes under the silk stocking, as a child does, when I put it on. I noticed the boot when she said she had them made in England, and saw the odd little star in the heel, which goes to show how everything that happened that night made its mark in my memory.

I brushed out that wonderful hair of hers, and she had me ring the bell, and the butler himself brought up a silver tray with a little decanter and a glass. Then she took a cigarette out of a gold case and took a few whiffs of it in such a natural, unconcerned manner that I almost had to smile.

When I took up Mrs. Grayson's hand to polish off the nails with the chamois I saw the prettiest hand that I had ever held, and I did notice then, with a kind of chill, that this was the very hand in the picture—the Rubens—dimples at the base of each finger, and pink, rather than white, the nails almond-shaped and rosy, the wrist round and dimpled.

Most women, you will notice, if you are around them much, have flat fingers, wrists and waists, longer through one way than the other, but Mrs. Grayson's were unusually round, and I think she knew she had a pretty hand, from the way she poised it as I polished it, for she must have seen my eyes on it.

For some reason, I couldn't tell you what, my heart went out to her as we sat there, me on the low stool beside her, and I knew I had a good mistress, although I had only been a short hour in her

company. A bit impulsive she was, perhaps, and maybe frivolous and a little vain, but not more than such a beautiful lady should be, with not a mean drop of blood in her body, I could swear to that.

She put on a white gown, soft and shining like satin, only not so stiff, with a lace flounce worth a fortune trailing off in the back—for I know good lace when I see it—and she clasped a string of pearls around her neck and took up a fan of white feathers. Then over her hair I fastened a wreath of glossy green leaves that came up in a florist's box.

I'd never seen anything like this before, most ladies wearing a star or a diamond butterfly, or a flower, or even a bow of lace or ribbon; but this wreath lay flat on the hair, quite low over the brow, with the hair drawn back over the ears to a knot at the back of her neck.

It was so simple and so beautiful, and she dressed so easily, as though she knew what she wanted to put on and didn't care so very much about how she looked, for she didn't ask for the small glass once. Even her waist, if you'll believe me, she didn't pull in, for the gown hung from the bust and seemed to cling to her.

She told me I might go downstairs with the maids for dinner, and that a bell for me was always to be answered in her room, where I was to wait if she wasn't there, and that I might sit in the corridor evenings if I found it dull waiting for her.

She was so kind and considerate that I almost could have cried, and she asked me if I was homesick, but I told her no, for I knew that Mac was only a few miles away, and she laughed and went out.

I gathered up the things and began to tidy the rooms, a little confused, of course, as to the right places for everything in spite of what Mrs. Horan had shown me, and then I opened the windows for to air the room, as I have always been accustomed to when the lady goes down to dinner.

I heard an odd, moaning sound in the trees that frightened me; it was like the wind sighing, yet it couldn't be the wind,

for the trees were as still as death in the grounds, and then the music came up from downstairs. Yet still that queer sound kept on coming and going, roaring and dying away a bit like the thunder, but keeping on steady—and then I almost laughed to think how stupid I was not to know that sound. For, of course, it was the sea.

## II.

I disliked De Brouguere that first night, looking down from the corridor, from which I could see everything without being seen. I knew him well by sight, and even better than by sight, for he had painted the portraits of two ladies for whom I had been maid, and I had been many times to his studio with them and to carry notes back and forth.

He was a foreigner, a Frenchman by name and a Russian by birth, for his servants were Russian, and told me much about their master, whom they did not love. He always flirted with a woman when he painted her portrait, and, while his reputation was well known abroad, somehow Americans are easily fooled, and the man was taken up a great deal by people in whose houses he shouldn't have been allowed.

De Brouguere was the fashion, and that was enough. I supposed rightly that he was there to paint Mrs. Grayson's portrait, for the master had a craze for having her beauty reproduced by great artists; and if a man is a foreigner and a fashionable artist, it is wonderful what people will put up with from him.

For instance, among the dozen other guests, who do not enter into this story, but whom I could see from the upper gallery, he was most overbearing and unpleasant in his manner, and when the mistress and he were alone, even for a moment, I could see him look at her in a way that made my blood boil, for she seemed to be afraid of him, and I could see that she was not at all bewitched with him, as the other ladies had been, and as most women were, for even Mrs. Grayson's guests rather slighted the other men for the artist.

On account of my liking for her and

what I knew about him, I found myself somehow keeping watch, although, as a rule, I never pry into the affairs of my people.

Mr. Grayson was a splendid host, although a little formal in his manner, but anyone could see that he was not only very proud but very jealous of his wife, and the men paid great attention to her, as, indeed, gentlemen are expected to when they visit in the country.

They made no secret that night of their dislike for De Brouguere, although Mr. Grayson, as host and prospective patron, made much of the distinguished man, but I could see that he disliked him. You see, it was no easy thing to get the artist to paint a portrait. Sometimes, they said, he looked a woman over and refused to do the picture, declaring that he could only paint beautiful women; so you can imagine that he said pretty much as he liked. Yet people made much of him and paid him immense sums for his pictures, although I will say of my own opinion that he made a lady look bold, in spite of herself. There was Mrs. Duncan Hoyt, a pale, lovely creature, devoted to the church and to charity. He painted her in a yellow gown and gave her a look in the eyes that made Mr. Hoyt have the portrait hung in a dark corner of the upstairs hall.

The story was that he made love to every woman that he painted, so that he could get natural expressions, and some of the gossip I heard about him through Mac, as well as what I knew myself, made me make up my mind to warn the mistress of his real character.

As I say, I caught glances between them sometimes that seemed to say that they knew each other, and if this was so I had no need to warn her, for I could see that she feared him. Then his manners were very bad. He carried his cigars lighted into rooms where none of the other gentlemen ventured, and even his tone of voice was overhearing and aggressive, as though he secretly despised the people about him because they were really above him.

This I noticed first when Mr. Grayson brought up the guests after dinner to

see the Rubens which hung in his room. It seemed that the conversation had turned to pictures during the dinner, and apparently De Brouguere had contradicted the value of the picture in some way, for I heard them laughing, as people will after dinner, as they stepped out of the lift to the corridor.

De Brouguere was denying loudly that the picture could be a genuine Rubens, which I found after was the name of the artist, a friend of his, perhaps, for he seemed to know all about him and his work. They gathered before the picture, and a row of electric lights that were set in over the frame in the top were turned on, and they sort of gasped, as I had done, with the nearness of the woman in the picture and the terribly living look she had.

Mrs. Grayson stepped nervously back out of the glare, and her pretty, laughing eyes were clouded and troubled like a child's. She held her hand clasped tightly over the fan, half hidden in the feathers, and when she moved away afterwards I found she had torn out a handful of them—the small downy ones near the handle.

The guests, when they got over their first shock, began to murmur their admiration, as people do at a picture, and the master was silent, but pleased in a boyish way, for he evidently admired this painting.

De Brouguere began to laugh loudly and insultingly as he peered at the canvas in the corner, where the odd smear looked like a letter that no one could read but he who wrote it there.

"An imitation Rubens," he said, "painted in Paris about eighteen ninety by an artist who made his living by his cleverness in imitating the florid style of the old painter. Painted, I should say, not even from life—or, I should say—from death. This artist, instead of going to the morgue for his model, chose a living woman, who turned away her head, perhaps to avoid recognition.

"But the artist, as he painted, lost sight of the fact that he was trying to portray a dead woman's body, and the

figure fairly pulsates with life. Look at the hair, the arm, the hand. And you thought it was genuine? Really?"

"If it is not genuine, then it is all the more wonderful," said Mr. Grayson, quietly; "a genius must have painted it. Granted that he lost sight of his subject, he painted life more wonderfully than he knew. It is an unconscious expression of art."

"It is a beautiful picture," said one of the men; "it is innate with something—a living, breathing personality."

"It is, as you say, the life in the picture that recommends it," said De Brouguere. "I should like to buy it and paint in the face that should go with it, and then call it a bathing Bacchante. I'll give you ten thousand for that picture, Grayson."

The room had grown very still while De Brouguere spoke, for no one could fail to hear something in his voice that fairly insulted the picture. Then this offer fairly took their breath away. Then, as they looked at the picture, it seemed to dawn upon them that the type was very like that of Mrs. Grayson, and, although no one spoke, it was in the air. Few of them had had as close a view of her hands as I had that night, the arm bare above the wrist and looking so like—so awfully like the arm of the woman in the picture, and which were, as the man said, entirely unlike the hand and arm of a dead body.

I looked at her as she stood back there in the shadow, and I can't tell you just how it was that I seemed to recognize the truth then of what I knew later. Perhaps it was because I had seen her shoulder and her throat and her hair shining against her skin as I dressed her, but at all events I began to think hard about it, and her face was so drawn and her lips so white that if the others had once turned from the picture they would have noticed it.

Mr. Grayson shook his head, half laughing, at De Brouguere's offer, and the artist held up his finger as though to an auctioneer.

"Twenty thousand," he said; "I'll make it twenty thousand! You Americans like to sell. Come?"

Mr. Grayson smiled, but he looked like a man who had a whip in his hand and was holding himself in.

"We Americans always like to make a profit," he said.

"Yes, but you Americans talk in dollars! I am talking guineas," he said, tapping his waistcoat pocket, boastfully. "Twenty thousand guineas!"

"Done!" said Mr. Grayson, quietly, while everyone in the room turned wonderingly to him, and De Brouguere, taken fairly aback, dropped his bravado and fumbled his waistcoat pockets.

"Good!" he said, recovering himself in an instant, and his eye swept the room until it pierced the shadows and saw Mrs. Grayson's white face against the curtain, as she turned hurriedly and led the way back to the hall, where they filed into the elevator.

Then she stepped back and called me sharply. "Tibbetts!" she cried. "Tibbetts!"

I hurried to her. Her face was ghastly. "Some rouge for my cheeks, Tibbetts," she said, "and some white cream from the flagon. I want you to rub it on my hands! They are so awfully red to-night!"

### III.

It isn't as easy as you would think for a couple to spoon at a house party or get a chance for a few words alone. Even the young folks, the girls and the unmarried men, have to wait for a dance that they can sit out, for, except on evenings when there is something special going on, the guests must flock together.

Like every other kind of social pleasure that I've observed in high life, it's not what you wish to do that you can do, but what is considered the polite thing. I noticed, though, from my place on the corridor gallery that first night at Old Oaks that De Brouguere didn't pay much attention to what good manners called for.

After that view of the picture, and the mock sale—for, of course, the master never meant the dicker to be in earnest—Mrs. Grayson had gone back to the



guests in the drawing room, but there was a change in the air.

The master, whiter than ever, seemed to watch De Brouguere with eyes that had murder in them, and Mrs. Grayson looked as if she had seen a ghost. As for De Brouguere, he was more overbearing than ever. He hung about Mrs. Grayson in a way that was very noticeable, and at the same time, if I may so express myself, he acted like a man that might be a little tipsy.

He talked loud, but when he was near my lady he lowered his voice, and, while no one could hear what he said, he seemed to be insulting her, and yet she appeared afraid to resent it, while the master, eaten up with jealousy and anger, was trying to control himself.

It seemed that they were all going over to the clubhouse later that night, as there was a dance there, and at ten o'clock my lady came up with the others, and they all separated and went to their rooms for wraps and carriage shoes to put on over their slippers.

I never saw anyone so changed as Mrs. Grayson was. I have told you how gay and laughing she looked when I first saw her a few hours before. Now she was pale, nervous, trembling, with an awful look of fright in her eyes, starting at every sound.

I went into the dressing room to get her salts, and I heard the master's voice in her room, and so I waited, for a lady can always call a girl when she wants her.

"You know that dog of an artist!" I heard the master say—not loud, as though he were going to scold her, but low and terribly quiet.

"Well?" I could hear her voice shake as she answered him.

"That is why you asked him here."

"Now, don't be absurd, Royal. You know that you suggested my asking him here when we decided about the picture! The man is a beast!"

"Why didn't you tell me that you knew him?" he said again, in that even, low voice of his, like a knife, it was so keen.

"Because, when I knew him," she

said, almost in a whisper, "his name was Cohen!"

"What!" said the master, and it was like the snap of a whip. "Then you did know him?"

"I did!" I could hear her breathing now—quick, panting-like. "Now, Royal, I must ask you to defer all this until later. Our guests are waiting!"

"You knew him in Paris——"

"Yes."

"In eighteen ninety?"

His voice was terribly hoarse and choking now, and I did not hear her answer. I almost listened to hear a blow, for I had lived in places where I got used to many a scene like this. I heard her cry out, sharp, as though he had caught her arm, and then she called, quite loud and distinct, as though she were calling for help: "Tibbetts! Tibbetts!"

I ran in. She had half fallen across a chair, as though he had flung her there. He strode out of the room, and she motioned me to close the door behind him. Then she crept over and turned the key softly in the lock.

She took my hand and beckoned me into the dressing room. My face must have told her that I had overheard, and I handed her the smelling bottle, for I didn't know what else to do.

"Tibbetts," she said, "I am going to trust you!"

I pressed her hand. I little knew what was coming.

"We are all going over to the club now," she said, very hurriedly. "The servants will be downstairs and the housekeeper is asleep. When the house is still and the lights are lowered on this floor I want you to go softly into my husband's room and cut the canvas from the frame in the picture over the mantel."

"Oh, madam, I wouldn't dare," I said, and no more I would, although I was sorry for her.

"You must—you must," she almost sobbed. "I will tell you why later! Believe me, I shall reward you well; I'll pay you anything you like——"

I drew up at this. "Thank you, ma'am," I said, "but I do no dirty work

like that. I am a decent, honest girl, and——"

She grasped my hands, crying now in earnest.

"That's it!" she said. "It is because you are decent and honest that you will save me. My happiness—my husband—my good name—my name—all depends on you! It must be done to-night! That picture must be destroyed!"

"I am afraid, my lady!" I said, crying, too. "I never did such a thing, and if I was caught—I'd be sent to jail."

"You will not be caught," she said; "no one dares to enter these rooms when we are away but the housekeeper. And she is asleep. You are to wait up for me, you see?"

"And when the master comes in and finds the picture gone—what can I say——"

"Why, that you fell asleep and heard no one."

"Oh, my lady, I—I——"

"Hide the canvas—somewhere—in your trunk—don't try to burn it. Just hide it. Do this, for God's sake."

"I can't promise such a thing, my lady," I said.

"You must—you must," she said. "This man that you saw has threatened to tell my husband at the club to-night. He is going to get money from him, and then he is going to publicly declare this picture to be his."

"What matters it what lies he tells?" I said.

"Oh, you don't know! You don't know!" she said. "My husband bought that picture when we were abroad on our wedding tour. He took an insane fancy to it, for some reason! I begged him not to buy it, but he would have it! He never suspected the truth! And that is what he will never forgive! I could have told him then, but I can never tell him now!"

"Better that you should tell him, my lady, than ask me to do such a thing!"

"Ah, you don't know him! I tell you he will kill me or himself—or this man! He is horribly jealous—and he will never forgive me! My God! You must destroy the horrible thing—before we return! If it is out of existence nothing

can be proved. There is a cipher signature in the corner that shows under a glass——"

She seemed to be wandering in her talk, as though she were crazy. "The scandal—the laughingstock that he will be made of at the clubs—in the papers," she cried; "but with this destroyed—at once, what matters it what this artist may say—what story he may tell? Money will buy him, but it will not buy my husband's faith in me while that picture stands in evidence!"

"You must hurry, my lady," I said. "They are calling you!"

"You will promise me?" she said, and she picked up my hands and kissed them.

"I am too nervous—my lady—I can't see why I should do such a thing! I—I—I——"

"My God, girl—can't you see? I am the woman in that picture, and this beast of an artist, that I thought lay in the bottom of the Seine, is the man who painted it!"

#### IV.

In spite of all the excitement, or, perhaps, because of it, I fell in a doze after I heard the wheels of the traps and the carryall crunch down the road under the trees, and I looked out and saw the lights twinkle away and fade in the darkness and heard the laughter come back from the women, for these swell people always must seem gay, even if their hearts are breaking.

But I was tired after the journey from town, and, indeed, I hadn't looked for all of this when I came to the country wishing for a change of air. Still, I've never been over-excitable, and I had no notion of carrying out Mrs. Grayson's orders as to the picture, even if she sent me away in the morning, and, as things were now, she would hardly do that.

Then, if I did try to cut the canvas from the frame, I'd be sure to fall off the chair in the fire and wake the house up, for I'm not at all clever at any con-ning of any kind.

So I fell off asleep at the fire, but woke with a start to hear a step in the

master's room, soft, like the step of a burglar. I don't know why I didn't scream, except that I thought it might be my lady come back for something, but I stood up and turned on the electric lights, and there stood—of all people—Mac!

He had a coat on over his livery—a long one, and a golf cap pulled down over his eyes, and he beckoned me to be quiet. I was mad enough at first, for I thought he had come over to see me, and sneaked upstairs, as indeed he had, although not to see me, but on an errand for the master.

Then he told me there had been a fight in the card room of the club—a quiet row, as he called it, between Mr. Grayson and the foreign gentleman. What it was all about he didn't know, but he knew it wasn't over cards, for they weren't playing, on account of the dance; but the men were there when it happened, and Mr. Grayson, it seemed, had thrown a glass of water into De Brouguere's face and De Brouguere had challenged him to a duel.

It was only an excuse for a fight, so Mac said, and Mr. Grayson had sent him back for a pair of special swords, and he was to take them to a certain spot in the woods, out of hearing of the clubhouse, where the dance was at its height.

It sounded a bit like a dime novel, and I told Mac so, but he said that Mr. Grayson had been to a German college, where fencing is a part of the education, so that De Brouguere had struck the wrong man when he made his challenge before the gentlemen at the club. I've grown used to gentlemen, and ladies, too, doing lots of odd things that would cause a stir if they ever got in the papers, but this seemed the queerest thing of all, and I was terribly frightened on account of what Mrs. Grayson had told me about her husband's temper.

I didn't tell Mac all I knew, for the reason that he seemed to be holding a lot back from me, but I reminded him that if anyone was hurt and he was mixed up in it he'd probably get in trouble; but he gave me a wink, and said:

"The fact is, Mr. Grayson isn't going to fight with him at all! He's got too much of an advantage, for he's a famous swordsman; but, I'll tell you what he is going to do when he gets the foreigner out there in the path in the woods. He's going to horsewhip him, and I've got to go back when he's through with him and pack the man off on an early train."

Then Mac selected a fine new whip from the rack on the wall and felt the thong between his hands and snapped it in the air, as though he enjoyed the idea of anyone getting it, although I wasn't sorry myself, knowing all about the artist.

"We don't want any scandal, that's all," said Mac. "It's got to be done quietly, and the ladies mustn't be frightened. They've heard talk of the duel, but they think it's a joke, and he told me to get this whip, and I alone know what will happen."

"Hurry along, then," said I; "but I wish I knew how my lady was taking that joke, poor dear!"

"There's no hurry," said Mac, as cool as you please, "and I wish you'd go in the other room and shut the door, for I've more work to do here to-night, and I don't want to be interrupted by any nervous women folk."

I looked him in the eye, and I turned on my heel and shut the door behind me softly, for I knew then that he was going to take away the picture, and that the master knew my lady's secret and was going to save her from the scandal she dreaded.

I thought then that if she had only trusted to him instead of telling me the whole story, he was clever enough to have fixed it all up; but the trouble was, she was afraid of him.

If I was like some ladies' maids I might make talk for her, but I know my place, and have never had the ways of common help. But ladies when they get in a scrape always trust everyone but their husbands, you'll always notice that.

It was so still after I left Mac in the master's room that I could hear the big clock out in the hall ticking away, and now and then that far-off roar of the ocean, that at night sounded

louder than in the daytime. Then I heard a little zip—zip, and I knew that Mac's knife was going through the canvas and the pink lady and the green sea and all. And when I thought of the empty frame and what might happen when they came home it made me shake.

I didn't dare look up, but Mac was buttoning his coat when he opened the door and whistling under his breath, and I knew he had it, for he was white, in spite of his whistling—like a man going through a dark wood afraid of his shadow.

"Good-night, Jenny," he said, and at that I began to cry.

"I dread to be alone here," I said; "such goings on! It's a fine house you've got me a place in."

He laughed low, with one arm around me. "I'll have money enough to buy you a house of your own after to-night," he said.

"What do you mean?" I said. "You're not going to murder anyone for money, are you, Angus MacDonald?"

"No—I'm going to make a little bonfire over on the rocks and scatter the ashes in the sea in about an hour," he said. "It's a queer fancy, isn't it?"

"It's a fool fancy, to my thinking," I said; "almost as silly as the duel."

"But there isn't to be any duel, don't you understand? It's only a bluff to get the Frenchman out of reach of the club and the women, and give him as fine a thrashing as ever a man deserved that insulted a lady," said he.

"Perhaps there'll be no bonfire on the cliffs, either," I said. "Fancy you riding two miles across the country in the dead of night with that under your coat. Don't be foolish!"

"It might happen in the furnace in the club cellar," said he, with a queer wink, and he went out on tiptoe, with his finger to his lips. Through the window I could just see his dark shadow as he went along on the frozen grass, not daring to step on the gravel for fear of rousing the dogs. His horse he had tied down the road, and I shivered with the

fear that he might be shot in the darkness for a robber.

Then I dozed again, and it was well into the morning when I heard the wheels on the road and turned on the lights and put logs on the fire. They trooped through the hall and up the stairs, for the lift man had gone to bed—and lucky he had, for Mac, and they were singing bits of song and humming and joking together as they said good-night in the corridor. I listened for the voice of De Brouguere, but I couldn't hear it, and, whatever excuse had been made, they didn't seem to miss him much.

Then the master came in with Mrs. Grayson. She gave one look up at the empty frame and toppled over in a faint on the floor. He picked her up, and I loosened her gown and we sprinkled water on her face, and she began to breathe hard, as though she were going to cry.

He didn't look once at the empty frame on the wall, but walked into his room and took from the pocket of his long coat a broken-up bundle of leather and silver and pitched it into the fire. It was the whip that Mac had taken away two hours before, and it looked as though it had done good work, judging by its condition.

He shut his door without saying good-night, and I undressed my lady and put her in a white dressing gown, and whispered to her about Mac's coming and taking away the picture by the master's order, and about the horsewhipping and all.

She listened to me with her big blue eyes opened wide and delighted with the surprise of the thing I told her. In spite of all the novels ladies read, they never expect their husbands to be noble like the heroes in the books and plays, for they know them so well, and I could see that she worshiped him for what he had done.

She left me standing there with the brush in my hand and crept over to the door of the master's room and turned the knob softly.

# A TRIPLE CORRESPONDENCE

By Alice Duer Miller

## I.

(Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 10th.

DEAR FREDERICKA: Or ought I to say Miss Waldon, now that you are grown up and I no longer twice your age? I had counted on being at the dock to meet you and discover what a certain young lady does with a yard of golden hair which used to be braided down her back when I saw her last. It was, indeed, the very last thing I could distinguish when you sailed five years ago—a streak of gold against your long, blue ulster. As it is, I can only send you this note, for my sister is very ill with typhoid fever and I cannot leave her even for a day. The house is full of trained nurses and young doctors, and every moment is critical, or else I would not let your father's daughter arrive unwelcomed.

Your sincere friend,

RAIMUND DALE.

## II.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

October 12th.

DEAR MR. DALE: I was just writing to you when your letter came. I am so very sorry to hear of your sister's illness—very sorry, too, not to see you, for I have something to tell you. I think it only right to let you know, as my guardian, or trustee, or whatever is your right title by my father's will, that I am thinking of engaging myself to Mr. Anthony Aikins. Mr. Aikins was with us in Switzerland a great deal last summer, and, with Cousin Lillian's con-

sent, crossed on the same steamer that we did.

You will probably assume that when I say I am thinking it over I mean I have already decided to marry him, but this is not the fact. I am taking a month to make up my mind. I need not tell you how much, at such a crisis, I miss my father, nor how grateful I should be for advice from some one whose judgment he respected as he did yours.

Cousin Lillian joins me in kindest regards. Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

FREDERICKA WALDON.

## III.

(Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 13th.

DEAR FREDERICKA: Thank you for letting me know your intentions, and also for the friendly tone of your letter. I was afraid that, like snakes and schoolmasters, guardians were the natural enemies of mankind. It was an immense relief to find there was nothing hostile in your attitude.

Now, though I am not much of a believer in living by rule, there is one rule I have never had any occasion to break, and that is not to give advice about love affairs; it serves no purpose but to furnish conversation to the lovers. But this case is different. Whatever you ask you must have, even though it costs me your friendship. Therefore, I should at once go into my inner consciousness and produce the best wisdom of forty years if I knew anything about the facts. Unfortunately, you see, I don't. I don't know

Mr. Aikins; I don't even know you. I knew the sweet, subtle, reserved little person that you were at fifteen, but how can I tell what five years of Europe has made of you? Nor do I know any of the circumstances; nor even the sentiments of the parties concerned. Suppose, then, I write to Mr. Aikins and ask him to come and spend a day or two with me. He won't be inconvenienced by the trained nurses, and, though I shan't be able to see much of him until dinner time, I can put a whole stable full of horses, in want of exercise, at his disposal. This would be a step toward giving you an opinion.

In the meantime I have some general beliefs on the subject which I offer for your consideration, namely:

That marriage is the most serious thing that can happen to man or woman, with the exception of falling in love; that falling in love is serious for many reasons, one of which is the fact that it is a form of self-revelation, a public acknowledgment of what your nature regards as essential in life, whether it be money, or beauty, or intelligence, or flattery, or goodness, for people have been known to fall in love with each of these. Now it seems to me that love is happy and lasting according to the worthiness and permanence of this its mainspring, and that when your nature, instinctively or by training, cries out for the thing which it is good for it to have, and gets it, why, then you see that rare and beautiful thing, an enduring love. On the other hand, when it cries out for something valueless or actually harmful, yet something which none the less it must have; in other words, when anyone falls in love with the wrong person, why, the result is very sad and disillusionizing, and yet, not to have had it at all would be worse. Therefore, I believe that if people are really in love, wisely or unwisely, they cannot do better than to marry each other. The unhappiness they get this way will be more valuable than that they get in any other.

But the important part of this opinion is that "If," for though I am a great believer in love, I have to own

I have not very often seen it, and, though I should approve the most imprudent of love-matches, I should oppose the most suitable without love. We hear a great deal of marriage being a leap in the dark, and so it undoubtedly is, if you do not carry your own lantern. Certainly you will need it, for the way is long and stony, and you would be surprised to know the number of people who wish they had never set out on it. The few who do not wish this are those who love each other, for their lanterns, to continue the simile, stay lit, whereas all cheap imitations go out at the first gust of wind.

I have never before been called on to deliver my views on this subject, and it is not an easy thing to do, so you must excuse my didactic style. I think the above about represents my opinions. From this you may judge that if you truly love this young man, you shall have my sincere support, although, by the way, it was only advice that you invited. If all that I have written is of no use at all to you, put it in the fire, and oblige me by thinking no more about it.

Sincerely yours,

RAIMUND DALE.

#### IV.

(Raimund Dale to Anthony Aikins.)

October 14th.

MY DEAR MR. AIKINS: Miss Waldon writes that an engagement between you is under consideration. Her father was one of my best friends, and not only have I her welfare very much at heart, but, by her father's will, I am left to determine whether or not her marriage is a prudent one. In other words, if she marries without my consent, I am empowered to withhold her fortune until she is twenty-eight. This power I am not, as you may easily imagine, eager to exercise, nor, indeed, have I any anticipation of ever doing so, and I may tell you in confidence that Miss Waldon would have to contemplate an unusually imprudent marriage before I would forbid the bans. I



thought, however, you would wish to know the exact facts and would also better understand my connection with her affairs.

I am detained here by the illness of my sister, but I should be very glad if you would come and spend a few days with me toward the end of the week, as may best suit your convenience, for I should like to have a talk with you before the matter goes any further.

Truly yours,

RAIMUND DALE.

### V.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

October 15th.

DEAR MR. DALE: Thank you so much for your letter—certainly the most interesting I ever read. (I should be ashamed to tell you how many times I *had* read it.) It was not at all what I expected you to feel. I thought you would say that everyone was better married than single, especially women, and that the younger a woman married the more likely she was to be happy. That, I know, was what papa thought, although I do not entirely agree with him, nor with you, either.

It seems to me that, though it is quite true that falling in love is the most complete solution of everything, there are a great many people who never do fall in love, and are, perhaps, incapable of doing so. Is it not better for such people to take the mild sort of happiness that is possible, to take advantage of any friendliness they may feel and marry and be as useful as they can be?

I am sorry to say that this is the sort of person that I am; I try to give as much as I can, but it isn't very much, and never gives satisfaction. Cousin Lillian is always accusing me of being indifferent, and, although she has always been so kind, I feel that she is right and that in a way I am indifferent. It was the same at school. I was never able to feel as warmly as the other girls did, either about the teachers or the other girls. I am a continual disappointment to those I most want to

please. This comes from having a cold nature, but what can I do to alter it? I cannot tell you how unhappy it makes me to fail those who love me, but since I can't love them as they wish, don't you think I ought to give the things I can—affection, sympathy and attention? This is my opinion. I am convinced that I feel more for Anthony Aikins than I shall ever feel for any other man, and I know that I want to make up to him for his misfortune in falling in love with such a person as myself.

It is very kind of you to suggest asking him to stay, and I do wish you would do it, if it would not put you out too much. He is very fond of horses, and so would not be much on your mind, and I should be so glad to have you like and know him.

I hope Miss Dale is doing well.

Gratefully yours,

FREDERICKA WALDON.

I hope this does not sound too egotistical, but I have been obliged to come to definite conclusions about myself, as person after person—all my best friends, and Cousin Lillian, and now Anthony, everybody, in fact, who has ever known me well, except papa—all make exactly the same complaint.

### VI.

(Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 17th.

DEAR FREDERICKA: Perhaps on the whole you are right, and if you are never going to fall in love you might as well marry a man you respect and be as happy as you find possible. The only trouble with this sort of reasoning is the doubt as to whether you are that sort of person. There is no possible proof that you will go unloving to your grave until you die. Some people think marriage equally conclusive, but on this point I am skeptical. It isn't a matter about which you want to make any mistake, for nothing would be so desperate as to meet the right man just after you had tied up to the wrong one.

Yet, on the other hand, it would be hard to go through life with nothing, when you might have had a very satisfactory second-best. As a matter of fact, I rather doubt whether you are entirely right in your estimate of yourself. You may have grown into a cold-hearted woman, but that is not the kind of little girl that you were. You had as strong, deep feelings as any woman could ask for, only nature had very thoughtfully gifted you with an unusual amount of reserve. For my part I do not attach too much weight to the assertions of your cousin and your school friends. By your own showing your father, who knew you best, and was, besides, much the most important of all the people you cite, never found you unsatisfactory. For my part, if I were the man involved I should prefer to think that you had saved your emotion for me, and had not dissipated it among them. However, Aikins is coming to-morrow, and, perhaps, then I shall be able to throw more light on the subject. Sincerely yours,

RAIMUND DALE.

## VII.

(Anthony Aikins to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 19th.

DEAR LITTLE FREDDIE: I thought of you all the way in the train, and tried to summon up my courage to meet your guardian, who turned out to be a much less formidable person than I had supposed. He does not look more than forty, and is the best built man, bar none, I ever saw. He met me at the station with a tandem, and offered to let me drive, saying he understood I was fond of horses. He has the best. I did pretty well considering, but I ran into the gate post. No damage done, and he was very good-natured about it.

He thinks the world of you, and showed me a picture of you at fifteen, which is the loveliest thing I ever saw. I asked him to give it to me, but he said he would see me further first, or words to that effect. We did not get down to business last night, but had a capital

dinner and were as friendly as you could wish.

This morning I rode over to the Tracys. They were very much interested in Mr. Dale. It seems he is thought something of "A deevil with the women." They said every unmarried woman in the county had had a try at him without success.

This afternoon he and I are going to ride together, and I hope to be able to put it to him that he ought to approve of me. By the way, why did you never tell me that he could hold up your money if you married without his consent? It was not a very agreeable fact to learn from him first. No matter, darling; even if he don't like me, we can get along, if only you will think you like me enough to try.

Your devoted

ANTHONY.

## VIII.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

October 21st.

DEAR MR. DALE: I am surprised to hear from Mr. Aikins that you have told him that you have the power to withhold my money in case of my marrying without your consent. Of course, I had no knowledge of this when I wrote to you so frankly, and I must admit I feel as if you had obtained my confidence under something very like false pretenses. I should never have approached you as a friend, if I had had any idea that you were holding this blunderbuss over my head. The idea of force in any form has always been extremely repulsive to me. In this case, however, it has served to show me my own mind, and I have decided to marry Mr. Aikins, whether or not he is so fortunate as to meet with your approval. I remain,

Truly yours,

FREDERICKA WALDON.

I should be glad if you could give me any idea of my father's reason for making such an extraordinary provision.

I have not mentioned my decision to Mr. Aikins, as yet, and I must ask you not to do so, either.

## IX.

(Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 23d.

DEAR, COLD, IMMOVABLE YOUNG PERSON: I have just received a letter which, if I did not know better, I should say expressed a good deal of emotion. I hasten to justify myself.

I did not tell you of your father's arrangements because I knew enough of your delightful sex to know it would annoy you exactly as it did; because, also, I never had any intention of exercising my prerogative. I *did* tell Aikins because men are not so sensitive, and like to know facts. Besides, it was my only excuse for interfering in his affairs.

I have no knowledge whatsoever as to why your father made the will he did, nor, if I had suspicions, should I confide them to anyone.

I note that you have not informed Mr. Aikins of your decision, and should have gathered as much from the look of anxiety with which he watched me read and pocket your letter this morning.

And now, since you have decided on so absolutely unexceptionable a person as your Anthony, my office practically ceases, and I bid farewell to the little girl who, I used to think, was the only member of the sex who could ever seriously disturb my peace of mind.

Always sincerely yours,

RAIMUND DALE.

## X.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

October 24th.

DEAR MR. DALE: I suppose I ought to apologize for my violent letter, but I think an apology is in order from you, too, for writing me a letter which not only made me very uncomfortable, but which, I am tempted to think, was intended to do so. It was quite the most disagreeable letter I ever received from anyone. Its whole tone was, to use your own word, hostile. Because I lost my temper is no reason why some one who pretends to be my friend should throw me over without another

thought. These are merely general objections. I have more particular ones.

I don't like your concealing things from me, and classing me with all other women as apt to be annoyed by facts. Please understand that it was not so much the fact as the mystery that annoyed me. I hope this is quite plain. I don't like your treating Anthony as my superior, and telling him things you thought best to hide from me. Well, you see what the consequence of that is. Then you don't seem to understand that if my father's will was your excuse for interfering with Anthony's affairs, it was also your excuse for interfering with mine.

Of course you meant to irritate me when you admit having suspicions which you won't repeat as to why papa made such a will. Why won't you tell them to me? I believe you conceal things from mere love of mystery.

What do you mean by calling Anthony unexceptionable? Do you dislike him? *Answer this candidly.*

As for the last few lines of your letter, I am not ashamed to say they were by far the most important thing in it, and you knew it, and put it in at the end on purpose. It may be very clever to be able to make a person feel as disturbed as you have made me, but under the circumstances, I can't say I think it very kind.

Truly yours,

FREDERICKA WALDON.

## XI.

(Anthony Aikins to Fredericka Dale.)

October 24th.

DEAREST FREDDIE: Of course it is none of my business, but do you think it is necessary to write Mr. Dale every day when you have not sent me a line since I have been here? Considering all things, it is rather trying to see a letter from you beside his plate every morning at breakfast. To-day he came down looking as glum as could be, and as soon as he had read your letter he cheered up and was in the best imaginable spirits. I must say I think it would be polite of him to mention how you

are, instead of putting them away in his pocketbook as if I did not know your writing when I saw it.

You may be interested to know that there is a young married woman who rides over here every day to ask about Miss Dale, of course, but it is not very hard to see how she feels when she only sees the nurse or the doctor as often happens. Of course, there is no harm in it, but I must say this is not the sort of man I should have selected to be guardian of my daughter if I had been your father.

Yours,

ANTHONY.

## XII.

(Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

October 26th.

DEAR FREDERICKA: I was naturally distressed to find my letter had so failed to please you. I will do my best to answer your fierce communication accurately; it is set up before me on my writing table. I shall not take up your general objections, beyond mentioning that the word hostile does not at all express my state of mind, and that that state of mind was not caused by your losing your temper, but by quite another statement in your letter.

Now for the details:

I. I am only too far from classifying you with all or any other members of your sex.

II. I had no idea that it would offend you to have your future lord and master considered in some points your superior, but I doubt extremely if I ever offend in this respect again.

III. My suspicions as to your father's will are not suppressed from love of mystery, but because I do not choose to impart them to the affianced bride of Mr. Aikins.

IV. I never expected to be accused of disliking a gentleman because I called him unexceptionable. By this term in this instance I mean steady, sober, well-off, unlikely to give you anxiety in the future, and, on the whole, a good, reliable husband for any woman.

V. I have never been asked before by anyone to say candidly whether or not I

like her future husband. Nevertheless, since you ask it, I will answer. Why, not particularly. I think him all that I said above. I repeat, he is an unexceptionable young man, but to me, not a stimulating companion. Besides, there is a natural antagonism between us, which if I were younger I should call by a more significant name. I am ashamed to observe the satisfaction I derive from seeing his eyes cling to your handwriting on letters addressed to me. And when he asked me a few days ago for a picture of you which never leaves my writing table I felt personal violence would have been the only proper response. This antagonism is not, however, the result of reason; it is, I am afraid, founded on some of those emotions which you are so fortunate as to escape. It is not, therefore, worthy of any consideration whatsoever.

There, my dear Fredericka, I hope your letter is answered, and now let me say on my own account that I see many excellent reasons for your marrying Aikins. The next ten years of your life are critical ones. They are the years in which women get the main part of their experience. To a woman like yourself, beautiful and intelligent, this experience would mean a long series of love affairs—one man after another sacrificed on the altar of your indifference, until you would grow so accustomed to being loved that the mere fact would in no way command your attention. This is a state of mind that makes life very complicated. You can see what a great difference it would make, for, as things are, Aikins' main attraction in your eyes is that he loves you. Now by marrying at once you would be saved all this sort of thing, for say what we may, marriage in the case of a high-minded woman such as you are, is as protective as a convent. For my part, I have always respected nuns. Their lives are happy, and if narrow, who minds as long as they don't? So marriage at twenty undoubtedly cuts a woman off from some of the most amusing experiences of life; experiences, however, which she may well afford to go without, since she enjoys them at the price of her sim-

plicity. After all, even the most sophisticated admits that a woman concentrated in her husband and her children is the happiest.

My sister is now so much better that I could easily run on to New York for a day or two, but I am afraid we have nothing to discuss any longer. Besides, Aikins is leaving to-morrow, and after you let him know your decision you will not have much spare time on your hands.

Wishing you every happiness, I am,  
Sincerely yours,  
RAIMUND DALE.

## XIII.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

October 30th.

DEAR MR. DALE: It seems strange, if you really approve of my marrying Anthony, that I never felt less inclined to it than after reading your letter. Nor do I think it particularly friendly in you to be so willing to have me marry a man you don't like. However, to be perfectly frank, I suspect you of being something of a hypocrite, and of avoiding opposition because you think it is too late. Do you want me to marry Anthony Aikins? Please answer at once.

F. W.

## XIV.

(Telegram from Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

Of course I don't.

## XV.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

November 2d.

Now, I don't understand at all, and letter writing and even telegrams seem to grow more and more unsatisfactory. Cannot you come on here, if only for a few hours? I know it is asking a great deal, but this is so very important to me, and so far instead of helping me, you have only made me distrust myself. I think if I could talk to you it would be different. It seems that you don't care to see me unless you have some-

thing to discuss, but I don't feel that way. This is my only excuse—that I want very much to see you.

I know you are going to write back that you won't come, and if you do, I give you fair warning, I shall cry.

F. W.

## XVI.

(Telegram from Raimund Dale to Fredericka Waldon.)

Shall dine with you this evening, unless I hear to the contrary.

## XVII.

(Fredericka Waldon to Anthony Aikins.)

November 5th.

MY DEAR ANTHONY: Although the month I asked for will not be over until next week, I think it fairer to tell you at once that my decision is made, and that I find I cannot marry you. I am sure that love is necessary to any sort of marriage, and the friendliness I feel for you is not enough. It would be too great a risk to take, for it would be just as dreadful for me as for you, if some day I should fall in love, as I am sure every woman is capable of doing. In any case, I do not feel that I care enough for you to settle down with you at twenty.

This decision is entirely the result of my own judgment, for both Cousin Lillian and Mr. Dale, the only people to whom I have mentioned the matter, agree that in marrying you I should have done a sensible thing.

Believe me, dear Anthony, I feel more sorry than I can say that your acquaintance with me should have brought you nothing but suffering, but it is quite impossible for me to give you any other answer, now or at any time.

Always sincerely yours,  
FREDERICKA.

## XVIII.

(Fredericka Waldon to Raimund Dale.)

December 14th.

DEAREST OF MEN, DEAR RAIMUND: What is the solid ground? I have

ceased to touch it. Air has become my natural element. Two inches of daylight may be seen, I am sure, between my feet and mother earth by any discerning observer. The object of this letter is not to tell you that I adore you; I made that only too plain yesterday, I'm afraid, but to ask you whether we ought not to tell Anthony? Yet how can I tell him without mentioning how

hideous a mistake it would have been for me to marry him? Only think but for the merest chance I might have. Or wasn't it chance at all, but your own desperate diplomacy? I know what you will say—that you will tell me when we are married, but you need not trouble yourself, because I know.

Your abject, pitiable

FREDERICKA.



## WITHOUT AND WITHIN

WINTER over the wide white world,  
And spring, spring in my heart;  
Snow-flakes coldly, angrily whirled,  
And I—I stand apart.  
For what is the winter's blight to me  
While I have thee, while I have thee!

Darkness wrapping the dreary plain,  
And light, light in my breast;  
Snow-fall changing to icy rain,  
But here there is warmth and rest.  
And sunrise, touching the waves into glee,  
Thou art the sun, and I the sea.

Moaning winds in the gaunt old trees,  
And a song of joy on my lips;  
Flowers dead on the frozen leas,  
And my cheek like petal tips;  
Life swells high as, at summer noon,  
I shall see thee soon, I shall see thee soon!

Discord, anger and strife abroad,  
And love, love in thine eyes;  
Sham and bubble and flimsy gaud,  
But here the deep truth lies.  
The space that parts us still is wide  
But thy eager spirit is at my side.

Sad-eyed Death through the shrinking land,  
But Life, Life in my soul;  
He may loose the silver cord's last strand  
Or break the golden bowl,  
I fear not his power for thee or me,  
For Love is Life, and I love thee!

VENITA SEIBERT.



# ARCANA OF WOMAN

By Josephine Dixon

Author of "Money and Matrimony," "Confessions of a Confessor," Etc.

CONSIDERING the number and variety of geniuses who have turned their attention to the study of woman and the solemnity and finality of their pronouncements about her, it seems unaccountable that she should yet be regarded as a mystery by the greatest minds of our times.

It might seem that the concentration of thought that had produced the cotton gin and the steam engine and discovered the laws of the movements of the planets and the secrets of molecular attraction and other large-sounding things, might also have solved the apparently irreducible enigma of woman.

In the far East, after they had spent a few centuries of meditation upon her marvelous complications, undistracted by Darwinian theories, they settled the matter by asserting that woman had been created æons before men. The inference was that man was not to be blamed for not having caught up, and it put the mystery back to the gods who were supposed to understand many things denied to men.

For my own part, I rather lean to the theory. The small matter of objections advanced by science and orthodoxy I patiently put aside. In no other way than by this advantage in time does it seem possible that in the complexity of her emotions, her reason, her logic, her imagination, her caprices, her abstractions, her sensibilities, her futilities, her intuitions and her concealments she should have advanced so far beyond that simple and elemental creature called man. The more complex the organism the greater the period that has been re-

quired for its evolution; the more intricate the invention, the more extended the time required for its construction. The development of the printing press was the work of generations; the button hook may have been the inspiration of a first necessity.

To the careful student it is clear that a woman's mind, like her body, is built on curves, and as the circle is the more perfect conception than the straight line, so should the corporate mind of woman be considered superior to that obvious and unmingled equipment of the other sex. Apropos of this characteristic of her mind we have the key to that curvilinear form of her reasoning which enables her to arrive always at the point from which she started—an attainment that has ever left man dazed and bewildered on the limited and rectilinear route of his logic.

I admit in the vast collection of opinions of women that have been delivered there have been few to concede her superiority. It seems to be the common error of human thought to despise that which it cannot understand and to define as imbecile that which passes comprehension. One caustic French writer observes of her: "*La femme est une créature humaine qui s'habille, qui babille et qui se deshabilite*," and George Eliot remarks: "I'm not denying women are foolish. God made 'em so to match the men." But it was left for Max O'Rell to pay the sex this serious tribute: "I have never watched a woman buying a hat without being oppressed by the sense of my own inferiority. That a woman can know which one of forty hats she likes best is incontrovertible

evidence to me that she has a mind superior to that of any man." For the most part, though, man in his labored studies of her has given her up as a riddle, or occasionally when one more searching than the others solves the enigma he discovers that, like so many of those simple conundrums with which our social friends assault us, the answer is no sooner learned than forgotten, while the question blooms forever fresh and insistent.

"Why is a woman?" the philosophers ask each other, and they shake their heads sadly and pass the question on. They try to define her, hedging her mysteries in with essays and epigrams, stalking her with poetry, setting traps with the tempting bait of acknowledged equality, and all the while she amiably eludes them and behind her hedge of inherited secrets laughs at their efforts. For it is not in the things that a woman says or does that man will ever come to an understanding of woman. It is in the secrets that she keeps and her reasons for keeping them that her marvel lies. It is the arcana of woman that constitutes the superiority of her intelligence, and by which she has ever held man her mystified slave.

And the secrets of this gentle being are such as lie within her headgear or appear in unlabeled bottles on her dressing table. To tell you why this is so, I should have to go back beyond the neolithic age when the female, by pinning up her hair with the thorns of the pike-bush and reddening her brown cheeks with the juices of berries, captured the attention of the chief and got dragged off by him and had an easier time for the rest of her life than the other women. That was the time she discovered that craft might be equal to muscle and that art was a better match-maker than nature.

Since that time she has been principally engaged in developing that idea, and if her conceptions of justice and honesty and humor have become a little twisted in the process, surely it is not for man to complain. It was he who set up the idea that a woman's value was according to her youth and beauty, and

thereby laid the foundation of all feminine dissimulation. For youth and beauty mark but a pause in time, while all the rest of life is scarcely long enough for the imitation of them; and if all the things in a man's life that were pleasant depended upon his complexion, I feel safe in saying that his ideas about nature unadorned would undergo serious alteration. Since they are not, however, and since, when he has a favor to crave he asks himself, "What shall I say," not "What shall I wear"; or when he is under discussion it is demanded "Is he upright?" not, "Is he a blond?" feminine equivocation may well be the object of his scorn and the subject of his humor.

A woman's incapacity for keeping secrets seems since the days of Pythagoras to have been the source of witty discussions, and to this hour is used in Masonic orders as argument for keeping women out. But on the other hand, a joke venerable with age, respected for its antiquity, its variety unstaled by repetition, is the secret a woman makes of her age. Now the world may be correct in thinking that women would reveal the secrets of masonry. But there are two kinds of secrets women have—the secrets they keep and the secrets they tell. I fancy the secrets of masonry would be good telling secrets. Other people's affairs learned under oath not to be repeated make the best telling secrets, but a woman's age is another affair altogether. A woman who will tell her age will tell anything, and is not to be trusted. If she has the true instincts of womanhood she can see no more reason for telling the number of years she has than for enumerating the number of teeth she has not. There you have the first and most inviolable of a woman's secrets. There are others, all concealing the same passion for the annihilation of the loathsome disease called *time*.

There is nothing so inexorable as gray hair and wrinkles, but things not influenced by prayer have been known to respond to massage, and the dermatologist three flights up is more than one woman's divinity. Secrets she would

not confide to a sister she pours into the sympathetic ear of the *masseur*, who from his very ability to understand, seems to have been gifted by nature with an emasculated spirit and a falsetto voice. Upon him, though, of all men, a woman can rely for comprehension. His sympathy may come high, but at least when one points out the crows' feet and the facial parentheses that are desolating one's life, he will not fancy he is offering solace by saying that "the heart has no wrinkles." A man may be able to expand a generous philosophy of happiness from the possession of an uncorrugated heart, but that sophistry is not for woman. She would be glad, indeed, if all the wrinkles could be concealed in the heart, or, in lieu of that, the suggestion of Ninon de L'Enclos, who said: "If I had assisted the Creator at the creation of woman, I should have advised Him to place all the wrinkles under heel." For the bitterness of wrinkles is not in having them, but in having them seen, and age is like smallpox—an experience not to be regretted if one has not been marked by it.

"I was meditating upon the insolvable riddle of woman," says Marcel Prevost, wearily, "and I said to myself that the duplicity of her mind needed nothing but the magic auxiliary of a second body to make her a contented criminal." Now, if M. Prevost had had the hardihood to turn his scientific attention to the toilet of women, he might have seen that if they have not yet attained to a second body they have at least made such modifications and improvements on the ones with which they were endowed that they are entitled to all the rewards of contentment, criminal or otherwise.

Throughout all time a man is a man regardless of the cut of the hair and the hang of his coat; but the "a" that and a' that" was not meant for woman, and wisely she goes to work with paint, powder, cotton and picture hats to make up for the blunders of nature. She may not succeed. Every aspirant is not an artist just as every repentant is not reformed, but she joins nobly in the great crusade against a woman's deadliest enemies—ugliness and age—

and she adds the secret of her failure or triumph to the great feminine arcana. It may be true that "the colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skins," but the relationship isn't apparent on the outside of them to the most observing man. There's plenty of beauty, too, that isn't even skin deep, though that is something a man never finds out. He may see rouge sold on any counter for fifteen cents a box—think of it, ten thousand blushes for fifteen cents!—and imperishable bloom purchased by the bottle and applied with the end of a towel, but he can never be convinced that a pink and white face isn't the sign of a pure heart and spiritual grace. He's a trusting creature from the very bluntness of his sensibilities, and when a woman smells like a chemist's shop he thinks nature did it, and when he hears the frou-frou of silk he believes it is silk and never stops to think she may have sandpaper attached to her knees.

It's the same with her hair. It may be like the smile that won't come off, or it may not. He doesn't know. He sees his wife emerge at nine in the morning with her hair as smooth and shiny as a patent leather shoe. At noon he meets her and it has assumed the proportions of a feather duster. "It's the hair, not the hat." He's positive of it, but the how and the why of the "rat" are beyond his limitations. He sees it by night on her dressing table. Is it excelsior, horsehair or shavings? Who dare analyze the thing? Is it fish, flesh or fowl? Who shall tell?

He sees other strange things beside it of which he has never learned the purpose or meaning. There are combs, buckles and curlers of every shape, color and device, and of every material from the hide of reindeer to the bone of the whale. There are pins long enough to spear a buffalo and small enough to make it necessary to take two in the hand before he can feel them. He couldn't use one if he were losing his most essential garment on Broadway, but he has seen her applying them by the half dozen, successfully too, as if it were a woman's destiny to make two

pins grow where one hook had grown before. He views the powders and the pastes and the perfumes and marvels that one small head could hold all the rules for using them in the right places and times.

Thus the poor bewildered man has ever before him the paraphernalia of a process capable of miraculous results and the understanding of which is stoutly denied him. The conversion of air into a liquid may be a marvelous achievement, but the conversion of a deep-tinted brunette into a dazzling blond is a phenomenon that exceeds it in interest. And if there is anything that could go that one better it is the character of the method by which it was accomplished. He asks for explanations, and not taking into account the highly involved quality of a woman's veracity he gets them. It was an accident. It is always an accident. There never was a woman whose hair suddenly turned another color that hadn't been the victim of fate. She just happened to wash her hair in champagne and sit in the sun. He doubts the story, but he never happened to wash his hair in champagne and sit in the sun, so he can't deny it. It is true he has heard of peroxide, but he has also heard her declare a score of times that no one with the first instincts of a lady could use it. His flashing mind discovers a major and a minor proposition and behold the syllogism—she is a lady, therefore she has not used peroxide. Could anything with a logic as limited and leaden as that expect to compass the subtleties of woman?

He turns to her headgear. Heaven may have made a woman's head, but the devil provided the hat, for in its architecture all art and artifice meet. The humble barnyard fowl and the haughty paradise bird; vegetable of the tropic and fur of the Arctic zones; the blood of animals dried into glittering sequins, and the white banner of a bird's maternity; the scales of fish, the tails of prairie dogs, vermin and fruit all mingle in aggressive equality on the common ground of duplicity. What does it represent? Well, principally money

and a woman's idea of art. For women *have* ideas of art, and there is a secret something in the soul of every woman that yearns for beauty and a "picture hat" just as it yearns for a Flemish oak plate rack and a cozy-corner.

A woman's hat may not be a man's idea of an artistic achievement, and he may disapprove of it generally, on the ground of its costliness, on the time it takes to adjust it and its lack of warmth and protection from the weather, but these are small objections beneath the attention of the broad mind of woman, for the three things that have no value for a woman are time, money and health. If she is asked to do without them she may take it a little to heart, but when she spends them she makes a man open his eyes. For a woman's economy—her saving of pins and rubber bands and ends of cotton strings and her expenditures of a year's income on a single *décolleté* gown, or twenty years of health on a pair of lace stockings, is one of her recondite eccentricities that man has never even made the effort to understand.

As to the time she can consume over a change of garments, the whole has been said without ever having been explained. The stories about it with which the heavy humorist of the vaudeville was wont to entertain us have been consigned to the limbo of antiquities along with the mother-in-law and the bad boy jokes. Things at which the world laughs it generally has hope of altering, but a woman's waste of time is regarded by a more serious age as one of the mysterious operations of nature to be endured with resignation and investigated by science and no more to be frivolous about than sun spots and the cholera germ.

A keen naturalist made the observation that "of all animals, cats, flies and women take the greatest time for their toilets," which really doesn't carry much significance, unless one takes in the subtle suggestion that the resemblance may be extended to include other characteristics of women that seem explicable only by analogy, such,

for example, as the feline disposition and the general persistent interest in the affairs of others displayed by the house fly. It is not easy to pronounce upon this subject. There are, no doubt, women who have certain cat-like propensities.

A woman's ethical ideas, after all is said, form her Royal Arcanum, for there is something about wearing false hair and shoes that are too small that gives a twist to one's moral views; and to accomplish curves and a complexion not intended by nature does disturb one's sense of values as to the real and the assumed; but it has always seemed to me that most of the sex were of an amiable intent, engaged generally in trying how best to serve the Lord without offending the devil. If this latter does not explain why the most virtuous of them love Sappho and Iris and Du Barry, and would rather read "*La Bête Humaine*" than Ralph Waldo Trine, at least as a theory it compels meditation.

Of their interest in the affairs of others, which seems to be one of the most baffling of the mysteries of women, one need not seek far for the explanation, for, more than dressing and dressing again women love to talk, and there isn't any woman who has enough in her own life to keep her in conversation. And next to telling your own secrets there is no joy like hearing other people tell theirs.

Talking just for the sake of talking, as one eats or sings without an ulterior idea of the good it will do or the service afford, talking without any effort to conceal thought or the lack of it, or to improve one's mind, or to acquire information, or to make literature or an impression—talking of this sort is a pleasure that men are cut off from. It is one of the feminine joys, like scrubbing one's own baby, that compensate for all the restraints of being a woman. It is to women what smoking and swearing and exercise are to a man. It's both sedative and tonic. It's the safety valve of all her emotions, and if there is a good deal of whistle and clatter when the steam is high, it's

merely the sign that the neighborhood isn't going to be wrecked by an explosion.

It's a small matter, scarcely worthy of notice, that the things a woman thinks are so widely divergent from the things she thinks she thinks or says she thinks. That her thinking and her talking do bear a relation to each other there is no doubt, notwithstanding the things that have been said to the contrary. It may not be the direct and obvious relation apparent in a man's conversation, for the immobile mind of man limits him to one of two conditions. He either thinks of the thing he is talking about or he talks without thinking.

A woman can accomplish not only those things, but she can think one thing and say the opposite, and you may have noticed that invariably when a woman talks of herself she is thinking of other women and when she talks of other women she is thinking of herself. The masculine mind can't do a "split" like that no matter how nimble it is, and the secret of its doing is yet with woman.

The way in which men view the general unaccountability of women, and the temper in which they admit the futility of trying to understand her vary according to their disposition and *habitat*. There are some who revolt, declaring woman to be the source of all evil and assert with famous authority that "a man has but two happy days with a woman—the day he marries her and the day he buries her." There are others who accept her more philosophically in the tenor of mind of a discouraged scientist who, admitting her as a necessity, said, "I would more willingly marry a small woman than a large one, for the reason that of two evils the smaller is to be chosen," and there are yet others, who, weary of her as a problem, would fain put her back in the harem, where if she couldn't be understood she could at least always be found, for in our latter-day civilization, with the advent of the bicycle and the automobile and the golf links, woman has added absence to her other mysteries.

With the patent bread machine, and

the penny-in-the-slot pie, and canned goods and the modern flat and the kindergarten, woman, knowing that all women are entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of men," abandons the kitchen for freer and wider fields of activity, and when men fling out to her the dish-towel flag of duty she openly voices the suspicion that they have not so much in mind the ultimate salvation of her soul as the personal gratification of having a servant that won't "give notice."

And men's ideas of the sphere of woman vary as much as the views they take of her contradictions and obscurities. There are some, as I have just said, who think she should be kept in the kitchen to minister to the physical well-being of men, and to be preserved from temptation, forgetting that Jupiter Olympus was the only one of the gods who was exempt from domestic difficulties. There are others who would adopt the electric suggestion of Byron, who thought that women should be taught music and dancing and a little plowing and mending of roads. And yet another class who believe that by patience and concentrated effort a woman's mind might be stripped of its ambiguities and the woman elevated to a companionship with men—and who, viewing the corsetless, hairless, complexionless result of the process, turn their backs upon the epicene realization and cheerfully marry the most factitious female of them all. But it's all the same to women. Cheerfully she "whistles down the wind" all their theories as to her place in nature, and very cheerfully she stows away among her little secrets the savoriest secret of them all, that she will stay precisely where she finds herself most admired, and do the thing she finds the most agreeable.

It wouldn't be worth while in a serious disquisition of this length to attempt to tell you of all the things that are hidden in the feminine arcana. To begin at the beginning, I should have to go back to Lilith, for the secrets of women are a part of their inheritance, and have been handed down as traditions without literature from generation

to generation of mothers and daughters. They include many subjects, as I have already suggested, and they form the great and impassable gulf that divides the sexes. For ages a woman's mind has been closed to man, and as a door that is seldom opened swings slowly on its hinges, so has it become more and more difficult for man to penetrate to the secrets that lie under a woman's hat. Their interests, their preferences, their ideas of equity, the things that amuse them, the things they cry about, the things they fear, their superstitions, their ambitions, their virtues are all cut on the bias, and are as much outside the range of a man's understanding as "polonaises" and the "Battenberg stitch."

The secrets of the toilet which are partly cause and partly result of these distortions are such as can never be revealed to man, for as long as men are men they can't understand them, and when woman can be brought to confess them she is unsexed. There are women, of course, who have revealed some of the principles of the arcana, but they have managed not to lose their sex characteristics in the telling. When a woman says: "Yes, I use a little powder for the sake of cleanliness; I use a little rouge to make me look healthier. I don't lace, but I wear a small bundle of three or four towels in winter to protect my chest and in summer I dare not leave them off. I am flat in the back, so I wear a small bustle, and I wear a switch because I think it is a woman's duty to her husband and children to make herself as attractive as possible"—when a woman discloses her secrets thus, I am not of those who think she is betraying the trust of her order. Rather is she revealing some of those gentle paradoxes that serve for the discipline of man or to keep him in a proper state of agnosticism about her.

But beyond and yet beyond the secrets of the toilet there lie arcana, to which every woman during her lifetime contributes a secret, sealed with hot tears and bound with quiver-



ing heart fibers. When behind locked doors she takes it out and with streaming eyes regards it, the pastes and the perfumes and the rouge pots of Paris are forgotten and wrinkles and age are as though they were not. What woman's breast does not contain its secret of secrets that all menace could not extract? Is it the shame or weakness of a man that she conceals from a world's judgment; is it his deceptions that she must ignore while she sees clear-eyed

to his uttermost evasions? Is she living down tear by tear a love of a life that a word to another has prohibited? Is it a child tainted by some inexorable inheritance for whom she would give her life if nature's laws of heredity might be deflected. Ah, who knows! They are a woman's secrets, scarcely worth writing down, but forming the great feminine arcana outside the door of which impatient man ever stands helplessly jangling the keys.



## A SOCIAL HAPPENING IN CANNIBAL LAND

KING Umballoo, the cannibal chief,  
His own sweet counsel took,  
And wedded Mary, a maid of beef,  
Bronze Mary Ann, his cook.

Then came society's arbiter  
To good King Umballoo  
And said: "A breath of a word, dear sir,  
I beg to have with you.

"Our social precedent bars a king  
From marrying his cook;  
Society, sir, is wondering"—  
He leered a knowing look.

King Umballoo in terror shook  
And cried, repentant, very:  
"Twas grievous wrong to marry my cook,  
So now I'll cook my Mary!"

The social scheme he thus set right,  
Did good King Umballoo;  
And all the cannibals came that night  
To see the family stew.

L. H. ROBBINS.

# THE FIFTEENTH NOCTURNE

By Sarah Guernsey Bradley

I WAS frankly prejudiced against Miss Bolton.

Had I known that she was to have been one of Mrs. Jack Middlebrook's house party, I should most certainly have declined the invitation, fond as I am of Jack and Mrs. Jack, and of their adorable old place on the banks of the Hudson.

I am not old-fashioned, and I firmly believe that many a time and oft, a broken engagement is the little ounce of prevention that is worth a whole ton of divorce cure for an unhappy marriage. Still, there was not a single circumstance in this case that could in any way justify Theodora Bolton's course of action, or mitigate the enormity of her offense.

Malcolm Arnold was my best friend, a man of sterling worth and marked ability. He and Miss Bolton had been engaged for nearly a year. Malcolm was working like a beaver, and making giant strides in his profession, when suddenly without a word of warning, or a syllable of explanation, Theodora broke the engagement, and Malcolm was the most wretched being in a world where wretchedness is not altogether the exception.

In a week's time Theodora was accepting the ardent devotions of young Alfie Beaumont, and in less than a month the society notes of the papers fairly teemed with the news that Mr. Benjamin Bolton announced the engagement of his daughter, Theodora, to Mr. Alfred Montgomery Beaumont, of New York and London. It also stated, just incidentally, of course, that Mr. Beaumont was a member of a dozen or more well-known clubs, that he had a string

of racers and a magnificent yacht, and that lavish entertainment was expected of him after his marriage.

I was away from New York at the time it had all happened (in fact, I was out of town during the greater part of the time that she and Malcolm were engaged), and when I saw old Malcolm a day or so after my return, I was absolutely shocked at the change that had taken place in the man. Where he had been cheerful he was morose, cynical where he had been the kindest soul on earth. I think, at the moment when I received Malcolm's heart-broken little note, I hated Theodora Bolton as cordially as it is possible for me to hate anyone, and my best enemy says that I am a good hater. The cold-bloodedness of the whole affair was what got at me. It was all so obviously a case of "to the highest bidder," that my whole being revolted at the audacity of the thing.

"Why did you invite me here with Miss Bolton?" I demanded of little Mrs. Middlebrook, the first time I was alone with her. One of Mrs. Middlebrook's chief charms is that one can speak one's mind to her without having her fly off into a tantrum.

"Well, why shouldn't I?" she asked, opening her big brown eyes very wide, and staring at me in amazement.

"Because she is the one woman in the world for whom I have a perfect contempt," I answered, crossly.

"I consider her exceedingly attractive, extremely good-looking, and I am very fond of her," returned Mrs. Middlebrook imperturbably.

"I grant you that she is good-looking

—she has the most wonderful gray eyes that I have ever seen.”

“Yes, hasn’t she?” interrupted my hostess, eagerly.

“But perhaps you have forgotten that Malcolm Arnold is my best friend,” I said, steadily.

“Oh, I see,” musingly. “That *was* a pretty awful affair. I never could understand it. I know Theodora about as well as I know any woman, and she has never given me an inkling as to the real cause of that trouble.”

“Real cause,” I echoed, scornfully. “Malcolm was poor and this precious youth is rich.”

“No, I have always felt that there was something back of it all,” she insisted. “Besides, I never thought Malcolm was half good enough for Theodora.”

I raised my eyes to the ceiling, believing heaven to be somewhere beyond.

“No, he wasn’t. She’s an unusual girl,” persisted Mrs. Middlebrook.

“Well, if *that’s* what unusual girls do, good Lord deliver us,” I ejaculated, piously.

“She’s good enough for me,” said Mrs. Middlebrook, firmly. Loyalty is Mrs. Middlebrook’s long suit.

“If I ever fall from grace, may you be my defender,” I said, fervently.

Mrs. Middlebrook smiled and said:

“You *know* I would be. But, to revert, I have never dared ask Theodora anything about that affair. She is as unapproachable, sometimes, as a mountain of ice. She absolutely freezes one.”

“I had never met her but three or four times until I came here, so I am not qualified to speak as to the chilling blasts. I knew her brother slightly, out in San Francisco—pretty poor sort.”

“Theodora is devoted to that brother.”

“He was out there I met Beaumont. He and Charlie Bolton were great cronies. There were some ugly rumors afloat about young Bolton. But they were hushed up. The next time I met Beaumont he was engaged to Miss Bolton. Heavens, how can any woman stand that coarse little cad!” I said, fiercely, as I mentally compared him with Malcolm Arnold.

“Oh-h——” she purred, “he is something of a shrimp, I grant you; but from *your* point of view he must be quite good enough for Theodora,” she said, smoothly.

“Well, yes,” I admitted, rather weakly. Mrs. Middlebrook chuckled.

“For goodness’ sake, Jackey” (I was a privileged friend), “don’t throw us much together. I might be rude.”

“Oh, there’s some one coming who will just suit you—Polly Sewall. She’s a cunning little thing. I’m not saying anything more, but I expect great things of this house party. Bert and Miss Randolph are as good as engaged already. I’m tired of *your* flitting around from flower to flower—or from pillar to post, to be more exact,” she added, half maliciously, if Mrs. Middlebrook could be malicious. “I don’t always approve of your *pillars*, to say nothing of some of your unspeakable *posts*!”

“If there were only another Jackey in the world!” I said, trying to look as though I meant it.

Mrs. Jack laughed—she isn’t pretty, but when she laughs she has the most fascinating dimples in all the world.

“Yes, I can see you and a Jackey fighting like cats and dogs, at the end of a week. Now I know exactly the kind of a woman you *would* like.” She scrutinized me carefully. “Yes—wait until you see Polly Sewall.” And she looked as wise as the Cumæan Sybil probably felt.

For three or four days I scarcely saw Theodora and her insignificant swain except at meals, and, in the meantime, Polly and I became the best of friends. She was absolutely refreshing. She was, as Mrs. Jack had said, a cunning little thing, but she was a great deal more besides, and her insight into human nature was at times positively startling. We golfed and rode and danced together, read Kipling by the hour, and there were only two subjects on which we didn’t agree: She hated “The Vampire,” and—she had an inordinate admiration for Miss Bolton. Whereas I positively gloated over the woman who “never could understand”—without mentioning any names, did I

not know a case in point?—and Miss Bolton impressed me as the most absolutely heartless woman I ever had the misfortune to meet. At table she talked and laughed constantly—it was a matter of marvel to me that she ever found time to eat—and I found myself wondering time and time again, how on earth Malcolm Arnold could have been hit so hard. I could only account for it on the theory that there's no accounting for anything. Up to this time I had had great faith in Malcolm's judgment. But now—I was firmly convinced that Theodora Bolton had not had one serious thought in her head, and I thanked the auspicious fate that had taken her once and forever out of Malcolm's life.

One night, two weeks or more after our arrival at the Middlebrooks' I had about decided that the country was no place for me. I was getting restless, and for some unknown reason, I, the perennially cheerful one, felt myself falling into the clutches of the devils which are blue.

The women had left the dining room. We were lingering over our coffee and tobacco. I had a splitting headache, and the smoke of the cigars was aggravating it beyond endurance. I excused myself finally, and started for the music room, which opens upon the terrace. As I neared the door, I became aware that some one was playing—playing with a touch which was the very incarnation of delicacy, force and feeling.

"Temperament!" I exclaimed. "Who would have dreamed of it in this aggregation!" I tiptoed to the door, not wishing to break the spell. There sat Theodora alone; the chatter of the other women came in from the terrace, through the open windows, in isolated snatches; but the sound of their voices was softened by the intervening distance. The light in the room was subdued, everything was in keeping with the mood of the player—the woman who a week ago I had judged incapable of one serious thought. I am very susceptible to music. I know to a certainty that feeling of which George Eliot speaks: "Certain strains of music af-

fect me so strangely—I can never hear them without their changing my whole attitude of mind for a time, and if the effect would last I might be capable of heroisms." Miss Bolton played along, perfectly unconscious of her listener. And after a while she drifted into Chopin—Chopin, the artist, the lover, pre-eminently the lover, who is to me the most innate musician of them all. She played a Ballade, a Valse or two, and then she began a Nocturne. I listened spellbound, oblivious to the distant chatter, and to the sounds of revelry in the room I had but lately left.

This was the woman I had said was light and heartless—the woman for whom I had a perfect contempt! I began a little to comprehend Mrs. Jack's fondness, and, to a certain extent, the strength of Malcolm's devotion.

I hesitated to break the spell, but something impelled me.

"Play the Fifteenth Nocturne, will you?" I asked, very softly, stepping into the room. She turned around to me quickly, and, even in the dim light, I could see that her face was pale and troubled.

"I thought that I was alone," she said, in a half-apologetic, wholly ashamed sort of way. Then, recovering: "Is the Fifteenth your favorite, Mr. Graham?"

"Yes," I answered, briefly. (I thought swiftly of the warning an old musician had once given me—"Never ask a woman to play the Fifteenth Nocturne, unless you are morally certain she has a soul"—and I remembered how often to my sorrow I had been compelled to marvel at the number of soulless women who are wandering upon the face of God's green earth. But to-night everything was different.)

"Don't ask me to play it if it is your favorite," Miss Bolton seemed to be very busy inspecting the piano keys.

"Ah, but I *do* ask you," I pleaded.

"No, Mr. Graham. I know what you think of me." She laughed nervously. "I—I'd rather not. Miss Sewall plays Chopin very prettily."

"I don't want to hear Miss Sewall;

I want to hear *you*," my tone was almost uncivil—to the absent Miss Sewall.

"Will you promise to forget that it is I, then?" I started to say something foolish, but I remembered just in time that this was the woman my best friend loved.

From the first note, her playing was a revelation. She played that wonderful Nocturne *almost* as I had once heard the master play it—that Nocturne of renunciation, pagan in its hopelessness, but bringing one at last, as through much doubt and suffering, unto the quiet and perfect harmony of everlasting peace. I did not thank her, when she had finished. It was one of the times when speech would have been sacrilege. I walked out under the stars, and admitted, once again, that Mrs. Jack was right.

I am not given to playing the philanthropist, but down deep in my heart of hearts I found myself wondering if, in some mysterious way, as yet unfathomed, I might not be the means of bringing this woman back to the man who loved her, and whom I believed she still loved. And there came another realization—a half-vague, wholly traitorous comprehension, that sent the blood bounding treacherously through my veins, and made me feel like the meanest of God's creatures. But I decided not to go home on the following morning. I told myself that I might be useful to Malcolm and—Miss Bolton. I did not try to avoid her after that night; I talked to her whenever I had a chance, and once or twice I caught little Miss Sewall looking at us rather curiously. Miss Bolton told me all about her plans and prospects, when the wedding was going to take place, where they were to live, how much they expected to entertain—all in that tone of rollicking hilarity which I detested, and which I had never seen her drop but on that one unforgettable night. I wanted to talk to her about Arnold, but somehow I could not bring myself to do it. I did mention him once, but her swift "Please don't," shut me up in a trice. I did not blame Arnold for having broken his heart over her—she was

worth an infinite number of heart-breaks.

About a week after Miss Bolton had played to me, I made up my mind that, for reasons which were perfectly clear to myself, it would be the better part of valor for me to leave Mrs. Jack's hospitable roof. I was making no headway so far as bringing Miss Bolton and Malcolm together again was concerned, and I felt that my peace of mind would be greatly increased by a few weeks in New York. New York is a good place for those who want to forget, and there were a number of things stowed away in my consciousness which I did not care to remember indefinitely. But that, of course, is mere detail.

I had been devoting myself assiduously to Polly and Mrs. Jack that afternoon, for over an hour. The rest of the house party had fled no one knew whither. I was as stupid as the traditional owl, Polly looked drowsy, and even little Mrs. Jack, the pink of politeness, had been stifling yawns for the last quarter of an hour.

"I refuse to bore you women any longer," I said at length.

They started to protest, but the situation was so obvious, that they gave up in despair.

"It's the weather," began Mrs. Jack.

"No, it's the man," I laughed. "And off I go."

They were both too sleepy to make much fuss, and I started off alone, my objective point being a field of new-mown hay at which I had cast longing glances earlier in the day, just beyond the quaint little summerhouse.

It was a perfect afternoon—that golden radiance that sometimes comes in the month of the harvest moon was upon everything. Off towards the west the Hudson flowed along, a shimmering, shining line, and, away in the distance, the Catskills loomed up, a mass of soft, velvety, elusive blue—a blue that was blue one minute and a tender green the next. Such days make me think that I know the meaning of that "peace which passeth all understanding."

I threw myself down on the soft,

sweet-smelling hay. And the perfect stillness, unbroken save by the soothing hum of a few tireless insects, got into my blood, and I slept such a sleep as one never sleeps except in "God's out-of-doors."

Suddenly, way off as from another world, I heard the name "Malcolm Arnold" spoken in angry tones. I raised my head in a dazed sort of way from its fragrant pillow, and turned around towards the summerhouse. Two people, a man and a woman, were standing there. Yes, there was no mistaking that voice with its coarse, thick intonation. I coughed, so as to warn them, and again I heard the name of Malcolm Arnold. And then I did what I had never done before, and what I have never done since, I listened; listened with every ear nature has blessed me with, and wished that she had given me a second set. For once, I was Jesuit enough to believe that the end justified the means.

"I can't do it, Alf; it's no use trying." It was Theodora's voice, pregnant with a misery that was bordering on horror.

"You'll throw me over as you threw Malcolm Arnold, eh?" Alf's voice was threatening. "Remember, my lady, that the circumstances are *slightly* different in this case."

"Oh, Alf, I do remember," said Theodora, pitcously. "The shame of it all is killing me."

"I absolutely hold you to your bargain."

"I can't, I can't," Theodora's voice dropped to a heartbroken wail.

"What about —, then?" I could not distinguish the word, but even from where I lay, I could hear Theodora gasp sharply.

"The day our engagement is broken, I must have that money in my hand," and he laughed maddeningly. I wondered, vaguely, whether I was at a lurid melodrama, or merely a guest at an eminently respectable house party. I hadn't an idea what it all meant, but I had a wild desire to get at Alf's throat.

"I can't help, I can't help anything,"

her voice was desperate. "All I know is that I'll kill myself sooner than go on with this a day longer."

"Ten thousand dollars the day our engagement is broken, or I'll publish that dirty story to the world." I did not think that so insignificant a man could be so brutal. I wanted to go right up to him, then and there, and trounce the wretched little life right out of him, and only the recollection that I was a gentleman, and Alf a cad, prevented my doing so.

"You'd better think it over, my high and mighty lady," he said, sneeringly, and with that he stalked out of the summerhouse and up the gravel path.

I lay perfectly still for a few moments until the sound of his hateful footsteps had died away, thinking over the wisest course to pursue. Yes, it was all perfectly clear now. She desired her freedom. She loved Malcolm as devotedly as he loved her—her womanhood was asserting itself. There was an ugly debt or something of the sort. I could make them both happy. And yet, for some inexplicable reason, the "fairy godmother" idea did not appeal to me as strongly as it had done a week ago. But it was my duty. It was what I had been wishing for—in fact, it was what I had stayed on for, the possibility of doing something for Malcolm and—for Miss Bolton. I had felt this climax coming. I told myself, from the night I had heard her play the Fifteenth Nocturne. I should do my obvious duty. Then I'd go away on a long trip—a trip around the world perhaps. And when I came back Malcolm and Theodora would ask me to dinner and I'd decline, because—well, perhaps because I don't care particularly for the newly wed. That ten thousand dollars, whatever it stood for, whatever it meant, should be my wedding present to Malcolm and his bride. I stretched out my hands toward heaven, and thanked God that I had money enough to indulge a whim or two.

"Miss Bolton," I said, very softly, as I went into the summerhouse. She raised her tear-stained face to mine, as though it were the most natural thing



in the world for me to appear just then.

"I—I have a confession to make." She looked at me wonderingly. I stopped short. It had all seemed so simple and easy while I lay out there in the hay field. It was all so difficult now, as I stood face to face with Theodora.

"I have heard some of your conversation with Mr. Beaumont," I went on at length.

"You heard——" she gasped.

"And I have come to tell you that—that I am entirely at your service," I paid no attention to her interruption.

"Mr. Graham," Theodora's eyes were fixed on me in utter horror, "you *listened* to that conversation?"

"Yes," I answered, boldly—I had a duty to perform, and it was no time to mince matters, though I felt like a self-confessed criminal with Theodora's big gray eyes upon me. "I listened after I heard Malcolm's name—I think that I was absolutely right in doing so. Malcolm is my friend."

"Malcolm *was* my friend; I was there to defend him, if necessity arose," she said, very gently.

"I am and *always* have been *his* friend," perhaps that thrust was unkind of me. She turned her head away. She understood.

"I would do anything in the world to make him happy, Miss Bolton. He has suffered miserably."

"Don't, please don't," she pleaded, piteously. "I know that he has suffered. He is not the only one."

"I heard you speak of some obligation—a certain sum of money"—Theodora's eyes flashed—"I hadn't an idea what it meant," I added, hastily, "that is by the way. Miss Bolton," and if I had never been in earnest in my life before, I was in earnest then, "will you allow me to place this money at your disposal? I should scarcely feel the loss of it. You and Malcolm can pay me back in the fullness of time."

"Malcolm," she faltered, and the gentleness in her voice stirred every bit of jealousy in my make-up.

"Yes. He is my best friend," I an-

swered, steadily, and I patted myself on the back at the commonplaceness of my voice.

"And you would really want me to accept this if it meant Malcolm's happiness?"

"I certainly should," I answered gravely, but I marveled at my lack of enthusiasm.

"It is a great deal to do for anyone," she murmured, softly.

"Not when a man is your best friend."

"Mr. Graham," she said, abruptly, "I don't stand very high in your estimation, do I?"

"I certainly never should have come to Mrs. Middlebrook's had I known that you were here," I replied, evasively.

Her brows contracted sharply, and her fine gray eyes filled with tears. I felt like a brute. The only thing in the world I *wanted* to do was obviously out of the question; for Malcolm was my best friend. So I walked to the door and looked at the sunset. That is a very safe thing to do sometimes. It is wonderful how utilitarian a purpose anything so beautiful as a summer sunset can occasionally serve.

"Mr. Graham," I turned away from the copper and blue of the skies to the gray depths of Theodora's eyes. "If some one you loved very dearly was in dire need, would you not do anything in your power to help that some one? You have just offered to help me—and Malcolm," she added, quickly. "Now," she did not wait for my answer, "suppose you loved some one a thousand times more than you love Malcolm; would you not count any sacrifice, no matter how great, small and trifling if it could bring absolute happiness to the person you loved?"

"I'm not unselfish, Miss Bolton; but I think perhaps I would."

"Oh, we know so little of the lives of others, and we judge so cruelly!" she cried, sorrowfully. And there was an infinity of misery in her voice.

I bowed my head—a sense of shame that was almost overpowering swept over me.

"Some one I loved very dearly," Theodora went on in a low voice, "was under

obligations of the most stupendous sort to a friend—friend, if God will forgive me for desecrating the name!" she broke out, bitterly. "Failure to meet these obligations meant shame, and disgrace, and suffering of the most hideous sort, to three people. I am not going to tell you who these three people were, nor what was the nature of these obligations, and I know that you will never try to find out." There was a half inquiry in her voice, and I shook my head gravely.

"A way out of these difficulties presented itself. It meant sacrifice of the bitterest sort to one of the three people." Her voice trembled. She looked over towards the sunset and was silent for a moment. Then, very gently: "Peace to a second, and escape from shame and dishonor to a third."

And suddenly with a prescience born of reverence, I knew why those ugly rumors concerning Charlie Bolton had been so quickly silenced and so soon forgotten, and I realized that I was in the presence of a woman the hem of whose garment I was unworthy to touch. And I tell you truly, at that particular moment I would have given my hopes of heaven if Malcolm Arnold had *not* been my best friend!

"I understand," I said, very softly. And then I added: "Miss Bolton, I stand ready to help you in any way."

"No, I'm afraid there is no one who can help me," she said, wearily.

"I tell you there is," I contradicted, earnestly. "Any material aid you may desire is yours." And then, after a pause in which I lived a lifetime or two: "Will you let me send for Malcolm?" And I hope the recording angel accounted *that* unto me for righteousness.

"Would you be glad to see Malcolm married to me?" she asked, simply.

"He is one of the finest fellows in the world," I said, warmly.

"Yes, but he is your best friend, and you know you don't like me."

"Not *like* you!" I began, fervently. Then I thought of Malcolm, and caught myself in time.

"You said *as much*."

"Oh, that was at first," I said, weakly.

"And this is at the last," her tone was so plaintive that I stared at her in surprise. She certainly was a creature of moods. I could not understand her.

"Would you be glad?" she asked again.

"Yes," I said at length, but I could not look her in the eyes as I answered.

She shook her head wearily.

"I told you that there was no one who could help me," she said, dully.

"But I don't see," I persisted.

"Because I am not thinking of Malcolm"—she spoke very rapidly—"I have not thought of Malcolm for some time. That is outlived and dead—killed, perhaps, by its own suffering. Yes, I knew that I should disappoint you," she said, in answer to my look of amazement.

"Every time you have spoken of Malcolm to me I have suffered tortures, because I knew that I *ought* to think of him, that I *ought* to love him, that he was worth every bit of loyalty of which I was capable. But—but—oh, Mr. Graham," she cried, piteously, "why did you come into the room that night when I was playing?"

My head swam. I dug my nails into the palms of my hands to make sure that I was not dreaming, and half fearfully I looked at Theodora. And in Theodora's deep gray eyes, and on Theodora's beautiful face was an expression which ought to have defied the unworthy man who had called it into being.

And then I did what I should have done if one hundred thousand million regiments of Malcolms had stood there in the doorway of the summerhouse, I took Theodora in my arms, and a great peace filled my soul.

"Aren't you ever coming back to earth? We've been here five minutes by Jack's watch," a laughing girlish voice called out saucily.

We turned around—there stood Polly, and Jack, and Mrs. Jack!

"It's the finest thing that ever happened, blessings on you both!" cried Mrs. Jack, her eyes shining like stars, and her dimples having the time of their lives. "You're the two dearest people I know—except Jack. Look out or I

shall kiss you both. Didn't I tell you I expected great things of this house party? If you *hadn't* liked each other my reputation for matchmaking would have been lost!"

Theodora and I stared in astonishment.

"What did I tell you, Jack?" triumphantly; "only get them together once, I said to myself! You owe me fifty dollars, Jack, dear," she smiled, sweetly.

"I'll take it out of their wedding present," growled Jack, but his eyes danced.

"And as for you and Theodora," Mrs. Jack chattered on, "you've both got to give me the best time that can be found between Twenty-third Street and Fifty-ninth."

"And what is there in it for Polly?" chirped Miss Sewall. "Didn't I puff each one of you up to the skies to the other one?"

"You certainly did, Polly," laughed Theodora.

"You certainly did, Polly," I echoed, and then we all laughed.

"Well, I'll take a dinner at Sherry's, thank you—with *all* the accompaniments," Polly added, impressively.

"You can all have anything you want!" I shouted. I was in love with the whole world, and, for the time being, the very incarnation of generosity.

"I believe I'd have fallen in love with you myself, Mr. Graham," said Polly, archly, "if you'd given me half a chance, and if it hadn't been that—well——" Polly hung her head.

"Out with it, Polly," commanded Jack.

"Well, you know you *can't* be in love with two people at the same time."

"Polly, are you in love?" asked Mrs. Jack, incredulously.

"Well, Malcolm hasn't really said anything——"

"Malcolm——" faltered Theodora.

"Oh, dear, I didn't mean to tell." Polly stamped her foot angrily. "Yes, Malcolm Arnold, if you must know," she said, defiantly. "Of course he hasn't really said anything yet, but I think he's going to! Oh, yes; I know he's one of Theodora's cast-offs, but I don't mind," she said, airily. "He's beginning to sit up and take notice. I expect to see him before so very long," and Polly's eyes twinkled merrily.

"Polly, look at me." I put my hands on her shoulders. "Are you telling the truth?" I demanded, sternly.

"Certainly I am," she said, indignantly.

"Well, why in Heaven's name didn't you tell us before?" And my sigh of relief was deep enough to have penetrated to the heart of the Catskills.

"Because I can keep a secret even if I am a woman," retorted Polly, proudly.

"Oh, Polly, dear, you're too funny," laughed Theodora, happily. But I knew just why she hugged Polly within an inch of her life.

"By the way, Jack," I said, suddenly, "will you take a note to Beaumont for me by and by?" Theodora shot me a glance of absolute gratitude.

"Sure, but not for half an hour or so. Alfie's got the most awful grouch you ever laid your mortal eyes upon," and Jack burst into a roar of laughter.

"Any time before dinner will do."

Alfie had a violent headache that night (so his valet told Mrs. Jack), and did not appear at dinner. And the next day his faithful man Friday had little difficulty in getting his master dressed in time for the early morning train.

## REGRETS AND ACCEPTANCES

By Beatrice Hanscom

I HAD just explained carefully and painstakingly to Priscilla, the reason why, to my deep regret, I could not come to her mother's dinner for the Atwell-Carrs the next evening.

"And I am sure you will be sensible about it," I said, with all the persuasiveness of which I am capable.

"I wouldn't be anything so silly," she answered, with much unnecessary positiveness.

There was a very sizable silence.

"I supposed you were far above the pettinesses of the average woman," I ventured.

"Did you!" she responded.

It certainly looked unpromising.

The library had lost altogether the look of coziness it had worn when I came in a short half hour before; the fire in the grate had died down; and Priscilla seemed to have an unreasonably remote air when one considered dispassionately that the chair in which she leaned back coolly was a scant eighteen inches from the one in which I was leaning forward nervously.

However, who ever considered anything about Priscilla dispassionately! What an absurd idea!

She was looking unusually lovely, too.

Nothing becomes her like a quarrel; and she lends to each and every one an air of finality which makes it difficult to remember that it has had many predecessors, and that its successor is probably waiting for you around the corner.

No existence in which she figured could ever become monotonous. For weeks I had been vacillating between the sensations of ballooning in rose-

colored clouds, and being plunged into an icy and swift-flowing stream.

It was easy enough to remember the possibilities of the cold plunge in the most rarefied moments of ballooning, but it was extremely difficult to imagine another ascent when struggling in deep water.

"You know I *want* to come," I said, reproachfully.

Priscilla's dimple reappeared from a long obscurity.

"You needn't stay away on my account," she said, with suspicious sweetness.

I groaned in spirit.

It is easy enough to sneer at the inconsistency of women in the aggregate; but when that inconsistency is crystallized and individualized in the Only Girl, so far as you are concerned, the sneer disappears and a sense of abject helplessness takes its place.

"Let us talk the matter over sensibly," I said, with a calmness I was far from feeling. "Here is the whole thing in a nutshell——"

"Oh, these shell games," she murmured, irritably.

There are times when I regret that Priscilla has a younger brother, and that the younger brother has a picturesque vocabulary.

"My aunt," I went on, a little stiffly, "has telegraphed me to meet her *protégée* at the seven o'clock train, and to see her safely on board the eight-five."

"Does your aunt look at all like Stanley Hale?" she queried.

"Why do you ask such an absurd question?" I demanded.

"Stanley," said Priscilla, speaking apparently to the toe of her slipper,

"gives a dinner to-morrow night for that pretty little dancer at Keith's."

"I call it confounded impudence on Stanley's part to assume that you would be interested in who he gives dinners to," I said, hotly. "It seems to me Stanley boards here, anyway. He comes often enough."

"Not too often," said Priscilla, softly.

"He's always under my feet here," I went on, angrily.

"Your feet?" she said, saucily. "I didn't think they belonged to you."

"If they did—if you did—" I hesitated, fully expecting to be snubbed, as is Priscilla's usual custom at this point. But she was smiling inscrutably at the fire. "Then, we could both cut this stupid dinner, and you would go with me to the train, and we would send the young person safely on her way, and then go off to one of the theatres and have a cozy little supper afterward; and then go home, Priscilla—home. That," I said, reproachfully, "is what would happen if you didn't keep up this absurd habit of yours of declining to make up your mind on a point of vital interest."

The fire continued to absorb Priscilla's attention.

"Mother's dinners are apt to be stupid," she acknowledged.

"I never get a chance to take you in," I said, gloomily.

"You were to have Mrs. Calderton," she murmured.

"For my sins," I groaned. "That woman's tongue would wear away a stone."

"And young men will be young men," she finished, sagely.

Then came a gay little laugh, as though she had come to a perfectly satisfactory conclusion.

"Dick," she said, leaning forward with an expression in her eyes that went to my head like a long procession of dry Martinis, "you're a dear, but you lack inventive faculty. That aunt story of yours is too lame to walk alone. But if you'll 'fess up what you are really going to do, I think—I think I'll forgive you."

"Even if I were going to Stanley's?" I questioned.

"Even then," she said, gayly—a trifle too gayly, if anything.

I had been washed up with the rest of the wreckage from the treacherous shoals of Priscilla's encouraging smiles before; and the experience had bred in me a distrust of the polar star itself.

"Well, I wasn't," I said, sulkily. "It happens that I was telling the truth. I suppose that's why it sounded so lame. Any idiot could make up a better story than that, I hope. It's a pity you're entertaining, or you could put the butler on my track and see if I really went to the station and whom I met. Though, for that matter, I suppose I could rent a sample from a promising young orphan asylum for the occasion."

Priscilla gurgled with delight.

"Splendid!" she said. "I didn't think you had it in you."

Just then the telephone rang, and she ran to answer it.

"Yes?" she said, sweetly, "yes. The Mater is agreeable. How nice! Oh, perhaps— Really? Yes, indeed. Do you? You're in a complimentary mood to-day. Yes, he's here now. You can ask him yourself," and she handed me the receiver.

"Hello, old man." Stanley Hale's good-natured voice was unmistakable. "That dinner for to-morrow night was just a fake. You understand, don't you? Well, don't you forget it, that's all. Going into the theatre party business same day and date instead. I suppose I can count on you *now*?"

"No, you can't," I answered, savagely. "Confound you! It's a pity you don't seem to know anyone else in the whole town."

"Good work! Keep it up," came back in unruffled tones. "Bet you fifty you come, though."

"I take you," I said, grimly. "If you must be parted from it, it might as well be by some one who knows you."

"You talk it over with Priscilla," he chuckled. I hung up the receiver with unconcealed wrath and picked up my hat.

"Must you go so soon?" she asked, in affected concern.

"Good-by," I said, firmly. "I regret that I can afford you and Mr. Hale no further amusement."

"And you won't come to mother's dinner?" she queried.

I walked toward the door.

There was a swish of soft fabrics, and a small white hand was laid detainingly on my arm.

"Couldn't you send your office boy to the station?" she said, beguilingly. "Jimmy looks capable enough."

"I could," I said, grimly, "and any boy who carries such freight in freckles continuously without ever losing one, is sure to be trustworthy. But as my aunt's bank account is certain, and her temper is not, I prefer to go myself."

I knew by the way my pulses beat, that Priscilla had come a little nearer, and her blonde head bent over the detaining little hand.

"Stanley vowed Bob was just joking about that dinner—that it was all a fake," she murmured, "and when Mrs. Atwell-Carr wrote mother this morning that owing to the death of a cousin, they couldn't come, of course, *our* dinner was off." (Accustomed as I am to Priscilla's surprises, I gave an involuntary start.) "Then Stanley offered to give us a theatre party, and the Mater agreed; and you'll go, won't you, Dick? You could drive over from the station in time."

Up went the balloon again, but I tried to keep my voice steady.

"Why do you want me to go?" I asked; but that treacherous voice shook a little.

The dearest blue eyes in the world looked into mine. Then the long lashes drooped over them again.

"I think," said Priscilla, softly, "that it must be because I wish we were really going—home—afterward, Dick."

Oh, rose-leaf lips! oh, the dear, maddening curves of that soft mouth that trembled and gave itself up in sweet surrender. How a man's pulses can hammer when strong arms close about one's heart's treasure, and the gods come back to earth again!

Halfway down the steps, I turned and went back.

The door was ajar.

"But if you knew all the afternoon about the theatre party—" I began.

Priscilla laughed, wickedly.

"Discipline," she said, gayly, and pressed the electric button. The hall burst into a glare of light, and I held a most unflattering opinion of the architect who put in that broad hall window.

I stepped into a passing hansom the happiest man on the continent, and no twinges of conscience beset me; for whatever you may think of Stanley's dinner, it had never been any affair of mine; there *was* a *protégée*; Priscilla was going with me to meet her; and I was on my way to Tiffany's.

There was no apparent connection between these items appearing in different columns of one of the great dailies two mornings later.

Mrs. Alexander Trent announces the engagement of her daughter Priscilla to Mr. Richard Hunter Thorpe.

Owing to a severe attack of grippe, Zarita, the popular little dancer at Keith's, has been unable to appear this week. The management filled her place with Herr Albrecht and his clever troupe of performing dogs.

Among the passengers booked to sail on the *Kaiser Wilhelm* to-morrow are:

Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell-King.  
Mr. Stanley Thorpe.  
Mr. Millikin.  
Mr. Crane.





# THE STEEPLECHASE

By Ashton Hilliers

"I SUPPOSE I could get him something in the foreign office," said old Lord Whelpley to my mother; then, to himself: "He's getting awfully like poor Tom, hum—hah! I say, young 'un, d'ye play whist? Of course you do; all boys think they do and—don't. Your poor father did, though. Hum! Speak French?"

Fancy putting such a question to a Winchester boy in the seventies. My mother suggested a resident French tutor.

"No, no," said his lordship, "the accent's everything, no linguist myself, but know so much. Better none at all than Belgian French, or some queer *patois* from the south or east—Parisian or none. We must bed him out—don't jump, Maria! He'll stand it; more than half hardy as it is; for all the world like poor Tom. Hum! Hah! Leave it to me."

My mother left it; her eyes were beginning to glisten, and her little, thin, white hand was moving up toward her throat in a way I didn't like to see, but it was over directly, and that day month I was housed with some nice people ten miles south of Paris teaching them lawn tennis.

Months slipped away, then one morning I found an English groom in difficulties with the animals he was exercising; the led horse had backed around to the off side and pulled him out of the saddle—spread-eagled the poor little chap. That was the beginning of it. His master, a man of some position, called to thank me, had me to dine, mounted me, found I could ride, and within six weeks I landed him a little steeplechase. We liked one another;

he was a good sort of fellow, fond of horses; no ride, but something of a judge. Under his auspices I suppose I may say that I entered French society.

My mother was alarmed, and not unnaturally, the dear soul wrote tearfully; made old Whelpley write, too. Had she seen his letter she would hardly have thanked him. It was something of this sort: "Hear you are chasing. Good. Quite right to have a specialty, and you cannot shoot, as I can testify. Only take two things on the faith of an old buffer: don't bet and don't squabble. Mind," he continued, "I don't say *don't quarrel*, and, if needs be, *fight* (which reminds me that you should fence for an hour a day regularly), but, again I say, don't squabble. Your poor father never did. Sweet-tempered man, your father, but, when aroused, dangerous."

Time went on; I was appointed, so wrote my Lord Whelpley, adding that there was no occasion to report myself for a couple of months; my chief had been given to understand I was polishing up my French, and quite approved.

This letter found me at Hyères, a little place near Toulon, where they have two pretty race courses, the one by the river a sound piece of English-looking turf, the other among the pine woods down by the sea, a sweet, pretty course, but sandy and deep in spots.

So far I had kept within my allowance and out of mischief. My mother had come to see me, and gone home comforted.

"Let him knock about a bit," said old Whelpley. I certainly did knock about a bit, but somehow retained a reputation for being "*très comme-il-faut*; *jeune homme très sage*," and a name for fin-

ishing cleverly, by which I set more store.

I was twenty, and could ride nine stone five. Does not that make your mouth water?

For this, among other reasons, and because old Whelpy had supplied me with good letters of introduction, a round of country houses was open to me. My host at the time I was speaking of was a certain count—never mind his name—it was prefixed and hyphenated and unreasonably long. Some of his friends said the family was *veille roche*, some said the opposite—it is all one now, you can see your way into that or any other circle except one or two in Germany.

Early in March there was a meeting, two days of it, they do those things in a pleasantly, leisurely way down there, no tear and drive, no punctuality, a short card, long intervals for flirtation and luncheon, and knock off early.

On the first day I rode twice, winning easily, too easily, perhaps—for it may have suggested to the count that his cattle were a class above their field, and could win whoever was up.

After the second race my mount for the next day was inquired for all over the place, and would have been made a hot favorite, had the name been declared. There was no *pari mutuel* then, and in default of the horse the public backed the rider, with the result that by the time the count had made up his mind, the bookies were full up, and our house party found themselves forestalled and unable to get reasonable odds.

But this didn't occur to me at the time.

A good many English had come up from Cannes and Monte Carlo, who made rather more of my riding than I cared about. The hotels were full, and a trifle rowdy; I heard afterward some story of an altercation in the billiard-room at L'Orient between an Englishman and one of our set.

That evening I was conscious of a slight change in the manner of the company toward me. It was not general, mind you; the women were all right, as

gracious as possible, a trifle too much so; which again may have had consequences; I cannot say.

You must know that the count had all along promised me a mount for the *Prix d'Hyères*, the big steeplechase on the second day. He had not actually named the horse, but of the two entered in his name one would probably be a mere pacemaker. The clever fellows of our set pretended to know which was which. I did not, for both seemed good class, and but for a singular chain of coincidences I should have gone to the post without a doubt that I was expected and desired to win with whatever horse I was put upon.

There was certainly nothing in my host's manner at the close of the first day's sport to arouse suspicion. As I climbed to the seat beside him on the box of the wagonette, in which we drove from the course, he clapped me on the shoulder and shouted with Gallic excitement his acknowledgments to the cross-fire of congratulations poured from the crowd below upon the lucky owner and his lucky jock.

As we bowled along the straight, white road between the eucalyptus trees, the count took a bit of a pull at his horses and descended to his everyday manner.

"Yes, you were in form to-day; yes, to win twice is good, yes! But you shall win the *Prix* to-morrow, my boy, with *Blé Blanc*."

"So that is settled," thought I. "The sharp turn before one gets to the open ditch suits that horse, I suppose, but there's no sign of rain, and if it is as hard as this to-morrow, those spots of clay in the course will try that game foreleg of his a bit."

This was to myself; to my host I expressed my thanks for his confidence, and said I would land the race for him if it could be done.

As we arose at the foot of the Old Town, some one remarked a big yacht inside the islands; she was close under the land, and ran in behind the pine-covered shoulder of the *Pic des Oiseaux* as we watched, leaving a long, white seam upon the shot-silk blue of the

sea. When I heard them debating between the courses whether the prince would turn up at the second day's racing, I put two and two together. English royalty was at La Costabelle that season.

The women on either side of me were very gracious; girls usually are gracious when they win on one's riding, and dinner went off well. When the ladies arose and the men drew up closer or gathered into knots—the change came—or I began to be conscious of it.

The house-party was large and mixed; as a lad I was at a side table, and not with the best of the company. There was nothing that I could resent, but I could not help feeling that the buzz of question and comment was intended for my benefit, and might perhaps be considered slightly aggressive.

Presently the betting began, or rather the offering, for I observed that nothing was taken. They were talking across me, which was not precisely pleasant, in silky undertones, of course, because they were Frenchmen, but still to be discussed to one's face as though one were a tailor's dummy is embarrassing.

"He won twice to-day, indeed, a great chance, a singular fortune; and if *Le Prix* had been run to-day I should have backed him, it is obviously his day, *mon cher*, but to-morrow—that is different. I should be disposed to reconsider."

"And why? A question of luck?"

"Yes, and—of nerve."

"But consider the horse, Boufflers. Blé Blanc is courageous, will face anything!"

"Can he st—?"

The question was cut short by a burst of exclamations that the horse was good enough for Chantilly, let alone a *dix-centime* affair in the Var. The man they called Boufflers, who was sitting back in his chair with a fat cigar between his thick, sensual lips, wagged his cropped head slowly with closed eyes, while his waistcoat shook with silent merriment; then, sitting up and settling his collar with a heavily jeweled hand, he removed his weed, reversed it, and pored solemnly over its glowing ash ere he murmured:

"Why, yes, if Talon were up."

"Ah," chimed in another Job's comforter, "that's it; who ever heard of a gentleman rider, that is to say, an amateur, whose nerve would stand two days of it? The Plage course is severe."

Which was true enough. The stewards of some French provincial meetings make up fences they wouldn't ride at themselves for a year's income. I've seen the post and rails bound with hoop-iron. But that is not the point.

I must have been more nettled than I knew, or I shouldn't have been so stupid as to open my mouth. My remark that the fences would be the same for all of us was sufficiently mild, but it was an opening.

There was a volley of exclamations, encouraging and otherwise:

"He means it!" "*Bon enfant!*" "I told you so; it is in them." "*Il chasse de race.*" "I wish I could agree with you." "I am, I regret to say, still unconvinced," and so on, and then more offers to back me.

There seemed no takers, and in the lull which followed, Boufflers leered at me quizzically over a vast crackling shirt front that gave him the air of a dissipated pouter pigeon, as he lisped:

"Monsieur does not back himself, apparently."

"I do not bet," I rejoined.

"This is singular," he replied, apostrophizing the pink cherubs on the ceiling. "Monsieur was thought to have won upon the second race to-day!"

This was true, but it was a lady's commission. I could not very well say so for reasons, so was silent.

"It is this want of confidence, so natural in the inexperienced jockey, that gives me the desire to hedge," he sighed, plaintively, sinking back into his seat with an air of disappointment, and watching under drooping eyelids the twin cascades of blue smoke descend from his nostrils.

A desire to score off the fellow got the better of me, and before I knew what I was doing I had asked him hotly what he would lay against me. Quick as thought he offered me two to

one against Blé Blanc. I was a fool, but not fool enough for that, and gently observed that this was not a flat race, and, as M. de Boufflers might know, it was always five to one against any horse in the *Prix*.

"He has reason, *le petit*," said a man, Fouquerary by name, and blandly laid me five to one. I was caught, I had named my odds, and accepted.

"To what amount shall we say?" cooed my captor, in softest accents, penciling his cuff. "Ten thousand *combien*?"

"Five to one in thousands—francs of course!" I added, just in time, for an attempt was made to pin me to napoleons, which failed.

Boufflers desiring to stand in, I raised my terms to ten to one; with a little shrug he took me. The ring of heads was closing around me, the smoke was very thick, and the voices very soft. I was getting on pretty fast for a lad pledged not to bet, and though inwardly mortified at my fall, was determined to see the thing through.

"Blount, *mon garçon*!" It was the count's voice behind us; how the men started! "Blount, you are not wagering, I trust. Oh, *c'est méchant*, a rider should never back himself! Gentlemen, I entreat!"

He glanced interrogatively from one to another; this admitted five napoleons, that denied flatly. "Ah, then, it is nothing, I see!" He laughed, but with an anxious ring in his voice that I noticed but misunderstood, and in another moment the circle was dissolved, my late companions were sauntering off nonchalantly in all directions conversing on general topics, nothing equine in their thoughts.

"Blé Blanc can win, count?" I asked, bluntly.

"Of course he can win, and will win with you for pilot. What have they been saying about the horse?" He shot a keen glance, and waited for my answer.

"Oh, nothing, it was my riding they farked."

He looked relieved, patted my shoul-

der in fatherly fashion, and left me with a pretty word about the morrow seeing his colors carried to victory for the third time. There was a general move toward the *salon*.

Ill-pleased with myself, for a young fellow likes to be popular, and it was forced upon me that I was less popular than I had fancied, I strolled through the conservatory and out into the gardens. The open windows of the low, long villa were full of lights, harps sounded from within; a great *artiste* was excelling herself, and every one who could find standing room was in the *salle de musique*; for my part I preferred the nightingales, and sauntered down the steps from terrace to terrace enjoying the delicately-scented darkness.

At a turn I came upon something gray, which made a jump at me, bringing my heart into my mouth. It was the girl I had taken down to dinner, agitated, almost in tears. She broke into a rapid torrent of words of which I could make neither head nor tail. I judged her to be in trouble of some kind, about a bet, it seemed, and angry, frightened and wanting reassurance. I found it not unpleasant work supporting and soothing her, and presently when she had said it all over again slowly I found myself.

"He will win, this beast Blé Blanc? He *shall* win, I say!"

"Certainly he shall, mademoiselle, if I can bring it off," I replied, cosetting her to the best of my small—very small—ability.

"There, I said so, I told them so!" she sobbed. "It is all false then, isn't it?"

"To what does mademoiselle refer?"

"Oh, how stupid he is!" she snapped. "And I've only a minute! Listen. You will not *roper* Blé Blanc? You will not let Count Talon win? Will you?"—eagerly—"Will you?"—beseechingly—"W-will you?" with a break in her voice that fairly lifted me off my feet.

"No! Of course I won't!" I stammered. "But why, in Heaven's name, should I? What earthly advantage

have I to gain by riding foul, and offending the count?"

I stopped. She was laughing low and deliciously.

"*O quel nigaud! O qu'il est bête! Mais il est jeune—si jeune!* Listen, then, dear boy, and when I have done you may—thank me." Her manner, which had changed thrice in a minute, was now that of an elder sister; she gently released herself from my support, and went on with the concentrated earnestness of a woman of business: "Our count here is a very clever man, but he is not rich, and when one is poor one must—"

There were steps upon the terrace above us, the excitable little creature laid a soft finger upon my lips, and holding my arm with the grip of a tigress kept me motionless. We were under a mass of flowering gum-cistus, quite hidden.

The people above paused; there were two.

"Lovers! Oh, this is charming!" breathed my wicked little witch in my ear, still holding me.

"Now we can talk." (It was the count's voice.) "You are sure he will turn up?"

"Quite sure. The drag is ordered for eleven, Sir Bounderby's. There will be a lot of them, the whole party."

I did not recognize this voice.

The count began again: "They know who won to-day? I mean who rode?"

"Certainly. They would be backing his mount to-night if there were any takers, but no official list of starters is out yet, and without a card the race is in the air."

"My oversight, but we'll amend that. Get some cards struck off within an hour. You'll find a fellow in the sub-editor's office of *Le Rayon* who will respond to this. They will be working late at their 'special.' I'll give you the list, not official of course, but it may serve. Send fifty up here, the rest to the different hotels. You will see to this?"

The voices faded.

"Now let us start," I whispered. "Eavesdropping isn't quite in my line."

I attempted gently to disengage my arm.

"If you do that I shall faint—shriek, I mean," she murmured in a very determined voice, tightening her grip until she positively pinched me. Decidedly I was in a tight place. There was nothing for it but to stay and put up with the loss of my self-respect. I was more than half vexed with my little tyrant, and would have made her pay for it if I had known how.

The steps were approaching again.

"—nearly spoilt it; after the ladies arose, Boufflers and some others must needs bet with Blount. I stopped it—in time, I trust. What folly to risk such a *coup* for the sake of cleaning out a child!"

"Who is this Boufflers, count?"

"How should I know? Bourse man, I fancy."

"Isn't Asher his real name?"

"Very possibly. The breach of hospitality annoyed me more than the stupidity—thoroughly Semitic. That sort will sell the most promising plant in the world for ready shekels. The worst of this kind of thing is the need for fellows like that. One can't lay against one's own stables in person. But I must not detain you."

"One word, count. If your youngster should win, after all?"

"*Soyez tranquille, mon ami*, he will not win."

"You would say—"

"What I have said, sir! Cannot you repose upon my discretion—me, who have so much upon this *coup*? But there! you are like the rest, I suppose, you will be hedging unless I open my hand to you! Regnier has his riding orders."

"To ride foul—you would say?"

"I would say 'good-evening, sir,' and beg you to expedite those cards."

Here the voices died away entirely, and we could breathe freely.

"You heard that?"

"I could not help hearing," I groaned.

"Now do you see?"

"Only that there is something up, for some reason I am not wanted to win."

"Well—well! you *will* win, won't you?—for my sake?" She was speaking fast and low, with her breath playing upon my chin. I promised fervently, wondering what would happen next, and before I knew it was released. I believe she did give me my chance, but 'twas a brief one; being young, I missed it; my arms closed upon empty darkness, and a mocking little laugh from behind an oleander told me my mistake. I did not pursue her as an older man would have done; the warm, dim breath of passion died off the mirror of my mind, leaving me bewildered in the grip of more urgent emotions.

Wrath at the thought of being fooled, fear of the unknown powers in whose hands I seemed to be, shook me by turns. The sweat broke upon my forehead as I realized my responsibility. "This is getting warm," I gasped. "It seems that I am the pawn that holds the position together. If I only knew their game! If I only knew! One thing they shall *not* do—get at my horse!" I was off to the stables.

The villa stands upon a spur of the coast range, the stables on the level below it, one end of the yard being cut out of the hill. Approaching this escarpment from above through a grove of ilex, I rested my hands upon the parapet and looked down before descending the steps. All was dark, and very quiet; from a seat directly beneath me came a murmur of low, gruff voices—English this time. I listened; doubtless a couple of imported stable hands discussing the day's doings.

"Ye see, I was so cocksure it was all on the square—that young Blount up and all, and him in such form, too! It seemed a moral and only common sense to put a bit on. Never thought I should be picked up by our own stable; and now to go and find you've bin took the same dadical way! It makes a man scratch, it do."

"Well," responded the other voice, "what dew yew make of ut? A hedge?"

"No fear, Brabançon took me."

"So a did me, bor!"

"Then it's a bleedin' plant; Blablong won't win!"

"Don't say that, bor! They dursn't scratch him; he's as hot a favorite as ever I see—for a chaser."

"Then they'll nobble him."

"Not while you and me set here, bor, and hare's where we must set—turn and turn about—till daylight to-morrah. That there's his box. Fit he wor when I bedded him up, and fit he shall be when he's led out. That there young Blount must do the rest—Pst!"

A light, unsteady foot was approaching, loitered past, paused. *Snap!* in the blue fizzle of a match one saw a lean, little face cocked sideways over a reluctant cigar. Both watchers recognized and hailed the man with boisterous cordiality.

"Blest if 'tain't George! Come hare, George—come here, yew image! Where yew bin this long while, hay?"

"Where I bin—hic—where hain't I bin? I bin Charntly; I bin Longshong, *hand* I bin Dovle. I bin most over the shawp. Hic!"

"Any fool could see as yew bin in the heighth o' sassiety. But what had yew got under them clothes this evening a-comin' up from the station? A horse?"

"Yes; you may call 'im a 'orse."

The speaker checked himself, resuming disconnectedly, after a hiccough:

"What won to-day?"

"Our stable—scooped the bloomin' pool. But about this horse; is he entered for anything to-morrah?"

"He might be—"

"For the *Prix*?"

"I didn't say so, nor I'm not a-goin' for to say, but if I warn't so bally screwy I'd lay ye odds I'd spot the winner. But I'm so screwy—fact—I can't see ye."

"No more can we see ye! We're all boosed together. Won a pot to-day! Young Blount (he's our gentleman), pulled 'em off anyhow. Yew never see nuthin' like it! And he'll ditto 'em to-morrah on Blayblong; yew may bet the tail o' yewr last shirt on him."

"Will he? Ha—ha! You wait and see! I'm not a-goin' for to nime no 'orse, nor no race, but—gug—gug—hic— Oh—oo!"



There was a choke and a struggle, the glowing tip of the cigar described irregular curves and lay quiet at a distance, while from the sounds I gathered that the stablemen had got the jockey down and were boxing his ears.

"There! and *there*, yew young dawg! To talk to an old pal so! Yew reckon yew've got the inside track, dew ye? Now, out with it! all yew know, and all yew *think* yew know, or Bill an' me will spank yewr ugly little head to a savory omlick! There, and *there*, again, yew bandy-legged sandpiper!"

"Self me, Mr. Dix, I didn't mean nuthin'! No, don't 'it me no more! I'll tell! Oh! he's a Fenouillet, he is! Sure-as-I-standere, Mr. de Morbihan's 'orse. There! I've done it now!" he whispered, tipsily.

"None o' you lies! We all know Fanny Wheely's gone to Austria. He were sold two months since, I see it in the *Le Sport*. Lam 'im again."

"So 'e were sold," screamed the jockey, "I'm a-tellin' ye so, but the sale was off; hereditary defect or suthin'. Anyways 'e were chucked for stud work, and put into training again, privately. We got a telegram after deejunay yesterday to bring 'im along 'ere sharp. Oh, Lord! I shall catch it for lettin' on!" And the sobs began again.

"Stop it! Dry up that! Yew ain't a mossel hurt. Here's yewr smoke, it's alight, stick it in yer face and attend to me. Now, *whose* horse did you say?"

"Why, you ought to know. It's all one stable, ain't it? M. de Morbihan's and your count's?"

"Hum—that's news, too, but I begin to see the game; dark horse from nowhere, eh, Bill? D'ye know this animal, Gearge?"

"Course I knows 'im; ain't I walked 'im, and schooled 'im, and give 'im his gallops these months past?"

"Well, ye ain't a-goin' to ride him this journey, 'cos it's a gentleman's race. D'ye know who is?"

"Some one—I did hear—looked him over in his box to-night—what did they call him? Thinnish, darkish gen'lman,

bit of stickin' plaster on his chin, here —"

"Talon," said both his hearers in a breath.

"Talon it was—you've got the nime. What's his form?"

"'Eavy 'ands," muttered the more taciturn of the helpers.

"Then sure-as-I-standere it's an open affair, after all! Fenouillet's got just the most delicate mouth you ever see; wants a hand like this 'ere, so; jest like that!" tipsily illustrating his method, as I inferred from the gyrations of the cigar.

"Will he show temper?"

"Run out to a cert."

"Ho! 'E'll run out?"

"To the near side, allus to the near if 'ard 'eld."

"Well, now, yew 'sprise me, Gearge; and is this horse o' yewrs a good 'un, can he fence and stay?"

"He can both, and he has a rare turn o' speed, seven pounds better nor your hos if he's a bounce. You'll see. I ain't a-'umbuggin' ye, tho' you 'ave 'urt my feelin's. At the distance he'll lose his field—that's if he's let alone. I could win on him."

I didn't wait to hear any more. I had never heard Morbihan's name coupled with the count's, but the whole thing was obviously genuine. A confession under torture! Good old Torquemada! But what to do now?

"The robbery is half over by this time," I groaned. "I wonder which of that side-table game had been told off to work the 'Grand,' and which is at 'Les Palmiers,' and 'L'Orient,' and 'L'Hermitage.' I am carrying a heap of money already, I fear, but nothing to what I shall to-morrow if the Costabelle party turns up, and are in the humor for a flutter. Oh, my Aunt Jemima! Why—oh, why the dickens was I born? I must sleep on this."

Never in all my life have I felt so keenly the need of an adviser. In no enviable frame of mind I strolled up the zigzags through the corkwood listening to the owls.

At the foot of the staircase the count overtook me. "To bed? Where has

he been, this boy, the whole evening? The ladies have drawn the smoking-room for him, they were peeping under the settees, on my faith! You had not an attack of shyness, *mon petit*, no? Then why did you miss the Velletri? You are bored, tired perhaps. Pont d'Avignon took hold of you to-day the first time around. I watched. How you stuck to him! Do as well to-morrow, *cher garçon*, do as well in the morning. Ta, ta!"

Lightly removing his cigarette, and kissing his finger tips, my fascinating host handed me my candle.

For the first time in my life I could make nothing of my bed. The mosquito nets rustled, the bamboo supports creaked, a sheet of loose bark upon a eucalyptus outside rattled, the tiresome jug-jug of the nightingale got upon my nerves. I would have given anything for a pipe, but with the thoroughness of a young rider in training I had sworn off tobacco, and turned it out of my kit. I dozed at intervals, but again and again I woke, grinding my teeth in the agony of a losing finish.

Suddenly the question presented itself: "How will this swindle be worked? You can't make much of a book on a field of five," thought I; "the English will be led on to back me, of course; but the other side will be expected to back something; they must do it to keep up appearances. They'll put a good deal upon this Fenouillet, and that is where I come in. Who ever wins, Talon shall not." Upon that resolve I slept.

It was a perfect morning, delicately clear, deliciously cool; we have no weather like it north of the channel. The crowd on the course was double that of the first day, giving quite an English look to the meeting, an illusion which the tones of almost every person I met helped to sustain.

What a well-planned thievery it was! My countrymen and countrywomen seemed to have gathered from every place upon the Riviera between Marseilles and Genoa. Yes, the count had not miscalculated, there was Dunderby's drag and the prince, the prefect is bowing, he is offering the hospitality of

the official box. The throng thickens; military men and their women, yachting men and their women, the Monte Carlo set, male and female; emaciated *poitrinaires*, strapping lawn tennis girls, velveteened provençals, *gens d'armes*.

Excitement deepened, the throng from all parts of the ring set toward the operator, a subdued clamor of earnest voices, a rustle of the leaves of pocket-books began.

Fenouillet was the horse, his name was repeated all over the ring in tones of amazement, incredulity, disgust, conviction. A party in his favor was formed in a moment. Fouqueray, carried hither and thither by the press, was booking bets all the while; Boufflers, or Asher, or whatever the man's name might be, was "operating" furiously, too engrossed even to smoke.

There was the usual parade in the paddock from which Blé Blanc returned to his box escorted, so to say, by a little crowd of Englishmen, some of whose faces I had seen in the photographers' windows. Among them was an exalted personage. Some one at his elbow caught my eye, murmured my name while gravely lifting his hat, addressed the exalted personage in an undertone, who nodded pleasantly, and then I found I was being presented and hastily uncovered.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Blount, and sorry we missed the sport yesterday."

I murmured something about hoping I should not disappoint my backers to-day. Less *gauche* than many lads of my age, I should not have turned a hair under ordinary circumstances at exchanging commonplaces with royalty, but, tormented as I was with doubts whether I ought not to speak out, or at least say something, I tell you I was in an awkward position. I had sought all the morning for an opportunity of demanding an explanation from the count. It had seemed quixotic the night before, it had appeared by daylight the straightest thing to do, but had proved impossible. I could never detach him. The situation was thorny; I was his guest, I was wearing his jacket, he was stand-

ing at my side, hat in hand, urbane, serenely expectant, Blé Blanc's quarter-cloth gracefully draping his arm.

My embarrassment was noticed, as I knew afterward, but was attributed to youth and modesty. His royal highness' response to my hesitancy was a prompt and jovial tender of encouragement. "Disappoint us? Oh, we've no anxieties. You know what you are carrying?"

"A good deal of English money, I fear, sir; I ought to tell you that I regard it as a very open event; Fenouillet reached Hyères last night; his supporters think very highly of his chance."

"Rather dropped from the clouds, hasn't he, eh? Supposed to be at the stud in Hungary or somewhere, wasn't he? Good joke if he wins. Do you know the horse?"

"I know nothing about him, sir."

"Quite so. Well, whatever occurs, we shan't blame you. I shall hope to see you weighed in." And with a gracious inclination he released me, and bestowed a few words upon the count, apparently an old acquaintance.

We weighed out. "I leave the race to your discretion," said the count, with his sweet, vivid smile as I mounted. While threatening the crowd that encumbered the course to where we were to take our trial spin, I saw Talon for the first time, a little dark man in gold and crimson, pretty much the MCC. colors; a light cavalryman, I heard. His horse took my fancy at the first glance; he had looked well in his cloths, but twice as well stripped. He was a big brown with a white hind foot and a blaze all askew on his face, grand forehead, and loins. How well he walked! At each easy stride the white hoof pressed the turf below the girth overlapping the print of the forefoot by fifteen inches, as I judged. Where had I seen that action? I put a question; yes, sire Wild Huntsman, by Wild Dayrell. "Then he's an excitable beast," thought I, "game enough and a natural chaser, but the sort that fences perfectly in the school, but makes a fool of himself in public. My first hunter was a Dayrell mare." Here my reflections were cut

short by Blé Blanc shying at a scarlet sunshade.

The start was delayed by Talon, who was engaged in an altercation with his horse at the trial hurdle. After the second refusal he brought him down at it with a rush, the horse made an effort which would have cleared an obstacle of twice the height, shaking his head while in the air and trying to break away on landing. As he approached I could see the clots of lather at his temples and under the boss of his breastplate; the mane was glossy with sweat, the knuckles of Talon's gloves discolored. The man looked determined, but surprised.

"He will know more about it presently," I thought, "those are the Dayrell manners all over— Poor old Wild Thyme, how she used to pull me about at a meet!"

The other three riders conversed gayly. There was Lieut. Wertheimer, green and amber, white cap, upon Flor Fina, a hot little bay. Being first, he had chosen the inside station. Next to him was Camors, in a wasp jacket, on Sydenham, a brown, English mare. I had ridden against both men the previous day, and was afraid of neither. Next to me upon my whip-hand was Capt. Regnier, riding Mclusine, a liver chestnut, my host's second string. He was wearing his own colors, puce and chocolate, I forget the cap, and affected to regard himself as my pacemaker, merely out for an airing and solicitous for the success of our stable.

In doing his best to seem at his ease he overdid it with smiles and chatter. I half turned in my saddle, and looked him straight in the eyes in silence, and was rewarded by seeing him lose countenance, blinking and moistening his lips.

"There's a pair of us," thought I, "for you are in nearly as big a funk as I am myself, and that's saying a good deal."

Having private reasons for wishing Talon to ride upon my off side, I ostentatiously left him in the outside station, and just as he came sidling and plunging into it I whipped Blé Blanc, who was as handy as a polo pony, across

his front, and let Fenouillet into my place. Regnier gathered his reins, and shot a meaning glance at Talon, who did not respond. We were in line at the moment. With a sharp "*Messieurs!*" the starter dropped his flag, and four of us got away level, leaving Mélusine at the post, for at the last moment Regnier had attempted to rein back and slip in between Talon and me.

I believe he knew Fenouillet's weakness, and intended to keep him straight at the first few fences by lying close to his near side and slightly in advance. If the horse had once settled down to his work, I am inclined to think he would have made an exhibition of the rest of us.

In a moment Regnier was in chase; a half glance over my shoulder told me that he was still intent upon separating us, but I closed in upon him when his horse's nose was at my knee. He adjured me to ride fair, and shrieked to Talon to give him room, but Talon entirely failed to take in the situation, and, indeed, had his hands full from the first. All three horses forcing the pace, two of them at their riders' wish, and Fenouillet because his jock couldn't hold him, we approached the first fence locked together dangerously.

At sixty yards' distance I saw Talon attempt a pull, and noticed his soaked gloves slipping on the greasy reins. Setting his teeth, he began to saw, and then the Dayrell mare asserted itself. Down went the brute's head, in the last five strides he fairly took hold of his rider, headed us by a length, and then, when almost upon the fence, ran out—as I had anticipated.

Regnier drew his near rein with a scream. I pulled hard to the off; in truth, I could concede no ground or I should have cannoned the guard rail. There was the simultaneous shock of three horses. Blé Blanc bumped Fenouillet's forequarter; Mélusine struck him full in the short ribs. All six of us were down, but with a difference, for while they crashed through the hurdles in a struggling, exclaiming heap, we arose at the obstacle after a fashion, and blundered on landing. I had ex-

pected a rougher time of it; to have paid Regnier in his own "riding orders," and knocked out Talon at his first fence would have been cheap at a broken collar bone. I had drawn my feet up, for a roll, and stuck to the reins for all I was worth, and was delighted to find myself among my horse's ears, with my knees under his jaw bones. He tossed me back into the saddle as he scrambled to his feet, and I sorted the ribbons and kicked my feet into the stirrups as he was getting into his stride.

A great hope leaped up in my heart, making me dizzy; could not I make a win of it, after all?

In nineteen cases out of twenty a fall puts you out of the race, but there is the twentieth case—my case; this was not a pumped horse falling the last time around.

Of course Camors and Wertheimer had passed me, but we had been leading them by some lengths at the fence, and the fall and the recovery had been so quick that they had gained no insuperable advantage. I had simply to hold my horse together, and let him recover his wind and nerve. How much had been taken out of him I could not tell; not much, I fancied, by the way he was breathing.

That my comrades in disaster would come again I did not suppose for a moment, and was proportionately amazed at finding Fenouillet's white face at my girths as we neared the open ditch. I shall never forget my relief at finding that his saddle was empty. It seemed that he intended to see the thing through on his own account, and the chasing strain in him told him what to do. He had come back into his bridle, and no longer having Talon to carry his head for him, was carrying it himself, and going magnificently. How perfectly that horse fenced! I felt that he had the legs of us all, and only hoped he would neither knock me down or cross me as a loose horse sometimes will do.

At the water—having no one to tell him it was the water—he jumped short, pecked, put his feet through his reins, and was caught by somebody, none the worse as I heard afterward.

So we went around the first time, passed the grand stand, a dazzle of colored handkerchiefs, a babel of shrill cries, and some English shouting. On a course at home there is often a bit of flagged-out, natural country sandwiched between the rounds, so that the horses shall not see the big made-up fences more than twice. They can't get this at Hyères, where the racing is on a narrow strip between the marshes and the sea. The Plage course is two kilometers around, and you take it three times. At the water, last time around, Camors fell, perhaps I should say, came off. I don't think he had much to be ashamed of; Sydenham, cunning old girl, wasn't going to be bullied into taking the brook three times in one race, and shutting up in the last stride, shot the wasp jacket over her ears into the tepid puddle provided for the purpose, and made a bolt for her stable. This is nuts to a French crowd—you could hear their shrieks of ecstasy a mile off.

Long before this, my nervous depression had disappeared.

Blé Blanc was one of the easiest horses to ride I ever crossed; free, dependable and master of his business; his trick of slewing his head on one side as he challenged a fence merely meant that he was measuring his distance, and did not mean to take off prematurely. The gleam of white in his eye, a sort of crescent moon in front of the pupil that he treated you to a peep of, was his appeal to be left alone—"Give me all the rein you can spare, and sit tight!" was what he meant to convey, and if you understood him, you might ride three miles out of the five with your eyes shut, for it never crossed his mind to refuse—or to race until called upon.

I was enjoying myself immensely, and caught myself chuckling with delight over what that beast Boufflers must be suffering.

But it wasn't over yet; no race is until you pass the post, and not always then, as you will see presently.

Wertheimer was no mean antagonist; he was watching me out of the tail of his eye like a serpent—and I watched

him. We weren't racing yet, but were going well within ourselves almost as level as a harnessed pair; I heard afterward that at two fences we were in the air together. It may not have been the most perfect jockeyship, but the pace suited Blé Blanc, and I wouldn't pull him without a reason. I knew Flor Fina was hot, and guessed Wertheimer couldn't get his horse to wait upon me without danger of an ebullition. The finish would show whether the race had been ridden at my pace or at his.

We reached the distance together; I believe we both suspected the staying powers of our animals. I knew the turn of speed I had under me, and kept level until the last moment. He tried shouting and flogging his boot, but gave it up with a sardonic grin when he found that these stimulants failed to flurry me. That little man did all he knew, and I liked him well. He was an outsider, not in the know, and rode for the love of it.

Twenty strides from home I called upon Blé Blanc, swung up my whip-hand with a yell, and humped myself with loose rein and squared elbows half up to his ears. Then I knew I was upon a winner; the good horse tightened up under me with a sudden quickening of the stride, and reaching at the bit that filled me with ecstasy.

Wertheimer found himself collared, and set to in earnest, and Flor Fina answered gamely, but it was no use.

I landed the race upon the post by half a length, and steadied instantly.

Then a shout went up, and I knew by the rhythmical pulse in the shrill tumult that my countrymen were according me three cheers. Blé Blanc was borne along to the weighing inclosure upon a sea of jolly, perspiring, open-mouthed English faces.

Just outside the gate was another crowd; excited, strident, well-dressed men were pushing, thrusting, expostulating passionately.

Making his way toward me through the press came the count, his alpaca dust coat in tatters, his neckcloth under his ear; forcing a mechanical smile, he exclaimed, breathlessly:

"Blount, *mon ami*, what is this? What they are saying is intolerable! We must confront them instantly. Come with me! Later? No, sir! on the instant!" This to an objector; then to me: "Come, Blount!" extending his arms as if to lift me from the saddle, while those about him pressed up, exclaiming that my honor was assailed, that it was needful to do this and that, but above all things to "come;" in fact, I ran a good chance of being coaxed or bullied out of the saddle.

I was very young, and was beginning to feel the reaction that follows a close finish even when one is fit, but I had presence of mind enough to see through this ruse. Some one had my right ankle in his grip, and was holding it down. It was all over in a moment, a jam in the gate, we were through, we were at the scale. I looked down to see the ruddy flesh-tints and white fringe of whisker of old Whelpley.

"Fine finish, lad, and neatly stalled-off; that last, I mean. But what a gang! Don't bend a leg till I give the word. Here they come again! Form a ring if you please, gentlemen!" The official nodded. Whelpley turned to me. "*Now, Charles!*"

I was down in a moment, and in the swinging chair nursing my saddle.

"*Bien!*" said the clerk of the scales, and the cheering was recommencing, when some one said the word "objection," and I was summoned to appear before the stewards.

"What's this, Charles?" said my old friend, his arm in mine, and his handsome, bland countenance expressing his concern.

"A most infamous plant from first to last, sir," I whispered. "For crossing it I shall be accused of foul riding."

"Where?"

"At the first fence, I suppose."

"You'll be well supported, my lad; your owner——"

"*Is at the bottom of it all.* If only I had time to explain——"

"Don't. Hold your tongue. Hi! Glenflesk!"

He hailed a short, alert, clean-shaven man of fifty, in a suit of pale checks

and pith helmet, who turned with the most genial of smiles.

"I am with you! What's up? Mr. Blount, I think; do me the honor, Whelpley, I beg—— Ah? So! Hum! May I come with you?"

What a question! I laughed aloud, too relieved to trust my voice. The sense of a lonely struggle against odds was passing off. I was sure of a hearing now, and however it went I should be well reported of at home. I entered the big room under the grand stand between the two longest heads on the English turf.

They had no business there? I admit it. It was not regular, but the stewards of a provincial meeting didn't feel themselves strong enough to exclude a peer and a baronet, members of the Jockey Club and of the Costabelle's house party.

Many entered with us who had no right to be present. At least a dozen must have been privy to the fraud, and when the thing began to work out contrary to their calculations the gang lost faith in their chief, and the smaller rogues shouldered in to see what might be done, keen on bawling and bullying down opposition. Where these went, others followed, for there was much money on me; the room was full, packed, indeed; an effort was made to clear it, and orders given, but no one stirred. Sir Pemberton seated himself with his back to the light, and deliberately unbuttoned his gloves. Lord Whelpley described himself as my interpreter! I shall never forget the placid frigidity of the one and the sweet reasonableness of the other as he closed his cardcase. Each assumed his position as a matter beyond question; between them they dominated the assembly.

M. Regnier had lodged his protest on behalf of Count Talon, he said, as well as for himself.

Were the stewards to understand that Count Talon had authorized the objection, had signed anything or sent his card?

It appeared from M. Regnier's reply that Count Talon had exclaimed



against M. Blount's foul riding before he fainted. He had written nothing. His arm or arms were fractured. Sensation.

Sir Pemberton Glenflesk interposed in measured tones with a suggestion that more evidence of Count Talon's objection was desirable and might possibly be obtained. A man in pain, and in the first irritation of a fall, might excusably drop a hasty expression which he would upon reflection withdraw. In the meantime would the stewards hear M. Regnier, and (at my suggestion) call the other riders.

Regnier was called upon. You can easily imagine his line; my change of position before the flag was represented as a crossing after the start. He spoke vehemently and at length.

Camors did not answer to his name; he had changed his sodden clothes, and sought his hotel in disgust at the exhibition he had made of himself.

Wertheimer spoke up clearly; he had seen no crossing. This was merely negative evidence, and was remarked upon as such by one of the stewards, a friend of the count's.

"True, I did not see the alleged foul, but, *messieurs*, I was in a position to have seen it had it occurred."

"M. Wertheimer deposes," said the secretary of the club, reading from a note he was taking, "that he saw no crossing."

"Pardon me," interposed old Whelpley, "as I understand this gentleman's evidence, he asserts that M. Blount did not cross."

"*Evidemment-c'est égal*," said the steward who had spoken before, but Lord Whelpley politely insisted, and the note was amended. At this point the starter entered the room, and was passed to the front. I appealed to him promptly to say whether I had changed my position before or after the flag fell.

"Certainly before," he answered, "or rather—I should say——" The fellow paused in confusion, with the count's eye upon him.

"You would say," said the count, in his silkiest tones, "that the change was

effected before the start, but that the crossing took place at the first fence?"

"Pardon me, M. le Comte," said Glenflesk, with a look upon his face there was no misunderstanding, "this is, I submit, outside all rule. A witness is called to give evidence, not to have words put into his mouth."

The rebuke was delivered with a high-bred gravity, and was so obviously just that there was a moment's silence followed by a burst of exclamations and counter exclamations. It was evident that if the stewards were partisans, they were not all of one party. Those of them who were not in the secret shot glances of surprise at one another, and at their chairman who was obviously losing control of the meeting. Each spoke for himself, M. le Comte was politely requested to reserve his remarks, he was asked if he had personally witnessed the start, he was invited to continue, he was told to resume his seat.

He kept his feet, and defined his position as perfectly neutral, he being, as the stewards were aware, the owner or part owner of two of the three horses involved in this ill judged, or rather, he would say, this unhappy collision—which two he had run upon their merits, merely backing Blé Blanc for a bagatelle to encourage his young friend M. Blount.

While speaking he allowed his eye to rest for a moment upon the starter, who, when examined upon what he had seen, averred that I had crossed at the fence.

I had no witnesses.

Lord Whelpley requested that the starter might be asked to leave the room for a few minutes, and proceeded to question Regnier with singular courtesy and acuteness upon our original stations at the start and subsequent positions at the fence.

The objector's evidence was directly traversed by Wertheimer, whose account agreed substantially with my own recollections.

When the starter was recalled he gave a version which tallied word for word with Regnier's evidence. The coincidences were astounding. He had prob-

ably been listening beneath the open windows of the committee room, but this idea did not occur to me until next day.

The majority of the stewards looked upon one another meaningly, the minority seemed puzzled. An adverse decision was imminent. The chairman whispered, wrote something upon a slip, and passed it around the table. It was received with shrugs, nods of assent, sniffs and glances at the ceiling, but came back to him unamended. He tapped the table, and arose, clearing his throat.

"Messieurs, I have a painful duty to perform, repugnant alike to the hospitable instincts—so French—with which, as individuals and as a society, we are imbued. My *confrères* and myself unanimously but reluctantly decide—"

The door opened, a burst of exclamations brought the speaker to a standstill while the crowded room made space right and left for a man who edged himself painfully through the press, protecting as best he might a crippled arm slung and bandaged to his side.

It was Talon, shaky and pale, and looking, as dark men do after a smash, perfectly ghastly.

"I hope I am in time, *messieurs*, the stewards, to tender my evidence."

"I fear," began the chairman, raising his hand, but Talon continued impetuously: "I heard of this objection; this—if I may be excused the expression, this *protestation pour rire*—but a moment since: I have hastened—"

"Monsieur le Comte de Talon, we cannot hear you now," interrupted the chairman, in his turn, loudly and hurriedly, for the fat was in the fire and there was no time to lose. "This court has already considered and delivered its verdict—"

A storm of outcries: "*Non!*" "*Eh quoi?*" "*Blague!*" "*Taisez vous donc!*" from many parts of the room staggered the speaker, but it was his last chance, and he kept his feet, licking his lips and gesticulating in dumb show amid a tumult in which while some

stewards strove to pull him down by the coat tails, others struggled to prevent them, and men danced upon one another's toes in their excitement, shaking little brown hairy fists, boxing one another's ears and grimacing, while cards were tossed back and forth across the room.

I was told afterward that I watched the hubbub with a broad smile upon my face. If I did it was bad form and undiplomatic, but the scene was for all the world like one of those sudden uproars which occasionally convulse the monkey house at the Zoo.

What would my friends do? They had kept their seats. I took in Glenflesk at a glance; he was admirable; the simple, unstudied pose, neither satirical nor defiant, but just cool, high-bred, non-committal.

Whelpley's honest old Palmerston face was hardening into the expression I had once seen upon it when he had missed his second horse at the check, and had a big double in front of him.

During a momentary lull they arose and advanced to the table in grim silence, hat in hand; the counterstroke of the rooks when the game changes from close to open.

I have not the faintest notion what they would have done, but my host's nerve failed him, or perhaps, to do him justice, he saw, as the senior steward should have seen, that the moment had come to yield. He leaned across the table, he whispered; the tumult fell, and I heard Talon invited to speak.

Could he? It was a question. I had given him my chair, and with the help of my friends and some of the saner sort had kept a ring around him during the scrum, but the poor fellow was in an almost fainting condition. Yet he held himself together with wonderful pluck, and jerked his tremulous undertones from between clinched teeth amid a strained silence that seemed all eyes.

"Messieurs, there was no foul. I have not heard the evidence, and I contradict no one. My horse was intemperate from the moment I left the paddock. I could hardly get him to the post. He bolted when the flag fell, and

refused the first fence. He ran out. I cannoned M. Blount. M. Regnier cannoned me. I know no more, but I am sincerely glad to see both gentlemen none the worse for my misfortune."

Next moment the count was grasping my hand, patting my shoulder; his delight was unbounded, he was ravished; no one had felt for me more keenly, had struggled harder, or—he might say—more successfully, to secure this entirely satisfactory issue. He gave Talon his arm, he enlisted our sympathies, our assistance in getting his gallant young friend out of this course. Our help was needed; Talon was slipping from his seat in a faint.

It was over; the clique settled their faces, tried to look pretty, and—I believe—paid up.

Acting upon Whelpley's advice I remained the count's guest for a day or two before joining my old friend at Cannes.

He and Glenflesk made me relate the whole story to a select party of six; the other four shall be nameless, they were very big people indeed, and I believe I owe any little opportunities in the service which I may have enjoyed since, to that evening.

It was decided to take no public notice of what had occurred. At the time this surprised me, but they were right; the turf as an institution is not sound enough to stand much purifying.

I was advised to "look pleasant and rise with my winnings," which I interpreted as a hint to make no scandal and stop chasing. I did as I was bid.



## THE VAGRANT

SHOULD the gods of unrest but fling at my feet  
A day and a life to travel this earth  
By ways where rivers and hills have birth,  
And outland, and ocean, and sky-line meet!—

For O to be idle, and careless, and free,  
Where the foam swings white and the world lies wide,  
And the heart that aches turns out with the tide,  
Where the will of the wanderer greets its sea!—

If the gods should grant but a life and a day,  
To wander and watch, to journey and rest,  
Each beat of that life—as the gods know best—  
Well, glad of it all, I should idle away;

And, Love, for the last gift left to me,  
Should turn where life and the roadway part—  
O, one fixed home of this wandering heart—  
And kneel, at the end, for a day with thee!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

# A MAKER OF MEN

By Alfred Sutro

Author of "Beneath the Moon," "The Late Mr. Cupid," Etc., Etc.

**SCENE**—a little sitting-room in a small house in a far-away street in Silvertown. It is evening; the lamps are lit, and the curtains drawn.

The furniture is very simple, its most prominent feature being a cottage piano, which fills a corner; but everything in it, from the chairs upward, is good of its kind, carefully chosen, and blends harmoniously with its neighbor. The books on the shelves, the wall paper on which hang good photographs of Rembrandt, Da Vinci and Velazquez, the flowers on the table and mantelpiece, the few bits of old china, brass and pewter, combine to invest the little room with a pleasant atmosphere of refinement and culture.

CUTHBERT FARRINGTON, and EDITH, his wife, are its only occupants. He is a man of forty-two, of medium height, with an eager, intellectual face. EDITH is ten years younger, a deep-chested woman, with a magnificent figure. Her face is strikingly handsome; the large, gray eyes are sunk rather deep, and the extraordinarily long lashes almost throw a veil across them. Her dress, cut a little low at the neck, and with sleeves bare to the elbow, is exceedingly simple, but of excellent taste and design.

EDITH is sewing, seated in an arm-chair by the table; CUTHBERT paces the room nervously.

CUTHBERT—Only nine! How the minutes crawl! It seems hours since dinner. Surely the post is late to-night?

EDITH—No, dear, the hour's just striking. A quarter past is the usual time. Are you sure you'll hear to-day?

CUTHBERT—Maxwell promised—and he's a man of his word. As soon as the directors arise, he said, I'll pencil you a note. A good fellow, Maxwell—he'll do what he can for me, I know.

EDITH—Well—in about ten minutes—

CUTHBERT—Yes; we shall know our fate. Oh, this means such a lot to me!

EDITH (gently)—Cuthbert—

CUTHBERT—You think me too sanguine, of course, and all that. But every man in the office is certain that I shall be chosen. Maxwell himself told me that there wasn't much doubt. And remember, this is the last branch the bank will open for years. They've been going ahead too fast as it is—it's my last chance. But what a chance! Here am I, at forty-two, getting seventeen hundred and fifty a year. As a manager at Malden I shall have three thousand, and any amount of possibilities. And such a house! Edie, you'll love it!

EDITH—We've been very happy here.

CUTHBERT—Oh, yes; but poor—grindingly poor. We've had to weigh every penny. Now we shall be able to afford tickets to the theatre once in a way—cabs—a little supper at a restaurant. We've been such mice so far! And it means another servant for you, and less drudgery. Oh, I tell you, I ask nothing more in life. I'll say, like Malvolio, "Jove, I thank thee!"—Isn't it strange that postman doesn't come?

EDITH—Don't be so excited, dearest—Mr. Maxwell may have forgotten—

CUTHBERT—He never forgets—he's the soul of punctuality and order. Oh, no, he's written! The letter's in the postman's bag—Heaven, to think of it! I'll make that Malden branch a success, I can tell you. I've got the stuff in me.

EDITH—Don't build on it too much, dear Cuthbert—you don't know what the directors may do—

CUTHBERT—They may pass me over, of course, but I don't think it likely. There's only one other man in the running—Pegwell. And Pegwell's my junior by three years. He's a smart chap, but he's my junior, and the directors are very conservative. It's pretty long odds on me. Oh, if it doesn't come off—it it doesn't—don't be afraid, Edie, I'll bear it like a man.

EDITH—I'm sure of that, Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT—I really don't care for myself—it's for you that I want it, for you. We've been married nine years; and a poor time you've had of it! You, the prettiest of the three sisters—and see how the others have married!

EDITH (*smiling*)—Do you think I'm dissatisfied?

CUTHBERT—Ah, with your maid of all work, and the three children upon your hands the whole of the day, you must often and often have wished—oh, never mind that now! It's over, I know that it's over! Three thousand a year, and a house—that's equal to nearly four thousand. And there are big opportunities—as the bank prospers, the manager prospers with it. Ah, Edie, no more sitting up late in the night, sewing and darning, and making your dresses—

EDITH—That's not a hardship; does my lord think that I dress so badly?

CUTHBERT—You! Is there anything you do badly? That dress you have on to-night—it's my favorite, too—

EDITH—I put it on for you, this being a special occasion, for good or for ill. That's a thing that's so sweet about you—you notice what one has on. Most men wouldn't.

CUTHBERT—Most men, poor things,

haven't wives like mine. Hark! That's the postman's knock next door—Confound him, what is he waiting for? Do we pay him to stand on the doorstep, and gossip? Here he comes, here he is— I'll let the girl bring it in—

EDITH (*arising and throwing her arms around his neck*)—Cuthbert—

CUTHBERT (*disengaging himself gently*)—All right! Don't be afraid, dear— If the news is bad I shall stand it— Sit down— Why doesn't that girl bring the letter? Can't she tear herself from her wretched novellette?— Ah, there she goes—at last!— She's taken it out. Ah! (*A knock.*) Come in!

(*A trim little maid enters, with a letter on a salver, which she gives to Cuthbert, who takes it and balances it feverishly in his hands. She turns to Edith.*)

THE MAID—Oh, if you please, ma'am—

EDITH (*pleasantly*)—Not now, Mary. To-morrow—

(*The maid goes. Cuthbert walks to Edith, and gives her the letter.*)

CUTHBERT—Here, you open it, Edie. Our fate's in there. Let me have it from you.

EDITH—Oh, how I hope the news will be good!

(*Without haste or excitement she opens the envelope; there is a small penciled note inside; she glances at it, and lets her head fall.*)

CUTHBERT (*drops of perspiration pouring down his face*)—Edie!

(*She holds out her hand to him; he strides toward her, takes the letter and reads it.*)

CUTHBERT (*hoarsely*)—Regrets—Pegwell—ah— Oh, all right— I might have known—

EDITH (*arising, with outstretched arms*)—Cuthbert!

CUTHBERT (*impatiently moving away*)—All right— I'm all right— It's frightfully hot in here, isn't it? Do you mind if I open the window?

(*He flung the sash open, and stands there, his back to her.*)

EDITH—You'll catch cold—

CUTHBERT (*closing the window with a bang, and coming into the center of the room*)—Pegwell! Of course! I might have known!

EDITH—Has he any influence?

CUTHBERT—Perhaps. It may be. My luck! My cursed luck!

(*She goes to him, he breaks away, and walks feverishly to and fro.*)

CUTHBERT—It was my last chance. Here I am, with seventeen hundred a year, arising a hundred dollars annually till it reaches twenty-five hundred. Eight years—I shall be fifty then. And at sixty they pension me off; and we spend the rest of our days in some wretched little country cottage. That's our future. I'm done—finished—

EDITH (*gently*)—You said you'd be brave.

CUTHBERT—One man after the other has passed me; and I started pretty well, too. A clerk in a bank, of course—but there were opportunities. Now I'm shunted—stuck in a siding for the rest of my life. Edie, you've married an ass, and that's the plain truth of it.

EDITH—We know better than that, you and I.

CUTHBERT—I'm a failure—a rank, rotten failure. Oh, yes, I am; I know it, and you know it. We used to think—I did, at least—that I was no end of a clever fellow. I had my theories, my ideas—I was going to write a book on banking that was to astonish the world. My dear, that book will never be written.

EDITH—Oh, yes, it will!

CUTHBERT—Never. There are piles and piles of MSS. shut up in that drawer; and you, poor darling, have listened to the dull stuff over and over again—but there's nothing in it. I'm like all dull men—I've a glimmer of an idea—but when I try to express it, it eludes me. That's the truth. I fancied myself above the average—the fact is, I'm below it.

EDITH—I'm no fool; I've a fairly clear intellect, and a fairly sound judgment. I believe in you; I believe in your book; I believe in your future.

CUTHBERT—My future! Ah, Edie,

it isn't really favoritism that has put these other men above me—men who were my juniors. It's because they were better men than I. I've known it in my heart a long time. And I'll tell you something else—that I've been ashamed to tell you before. I had a great chance—three years ago. Never mind how—it would take a long time to tell, and it's an intricate banking matter—but one of our biggest clients was swindling us, and I might have found it out. I didn't. No one could blame me, of course—I had done all my routine work well enough—but there it was.

EDITH—Did any one else discover it?

CUTHBERT—No, but I might have. It's like the born whist player, who divines what his partner holds. The bank was let in for a hundred thousand. And the maddening thing is that I had a vague suspicion. But I just lacked the something—in point of fact, the brain. No one blamed me—no one could blame me—everything was right, as far as I was concerned—but fortune had knocked at my door, and I wouldn't open. The directors said nothing, of course—what could they say?—but that's why I've been passed over, and am passed over to-day. I hoped they'd forgotten—they haven't. There—I've got it off my chest. I shall be a wretched bank clerk for the rest of my days. I've made a hash of my life—and, what's worse, of yours.

EDITH—Finished?

CUTHBERT—Yes—I've had my say; now you know all about it. Now you see what sort of man you've had the bad luck to marry.

EDITH—I'm afraid I'm not as sorry for myself as I should be.

CUTHBERT—Ah, of course, you won't admit it! But when I look at you now—why, with all the hard work, and slaving, and the three children, you're as pretty to-day as you were when I married you—

EDITH—You dear!

CUTHBERT—You manage to dress on comparatively nothing a year, and look as though you were turned out by the most fashionable dressmaker; you're



a splendid musician, you find time to read and to think of what you have read; in fact, you're a remarkable woman, and you deserved to marry a man who was worthy of you—

EDITH—Like Tom?

CUTHBERT—Why not? Hilda can't hold a candle to you—and *her* husband has fifty thousand a year!

EDITH—A house in Fifth Avenue, a cottage at Lenox, a yacht, an automobile, and a most shocking temper.

CUTHBERT—That's all very well! Edie, Edie, you must have said these things to yourself many a time!

EDITH—Every day after lunch.

CUTHBERT—You've never murmured, of course, or complained—it's not your way. But that's what galls me. There was the golden chance—I let it go by. Ass, ass! And you, my poor darling, denied every luxury, every trifle that sweetens life!

EDITH—You needn't be sorry for me—

CUTHBERT—For whom else? *I'm* all right. I go out in the morning, come back at night, and there you are, waiting for me, always the same, always with a smile on your lips. But how have you passed the day? The little dinner's ready—as dainty a dinner as a man could desire—but who has cooked it? You. What have you done those long and tedious hours? You have been with the children, all the time with the children. You have been teaching, dusting, darning, sewing, mending. On whom does the burden of our wretched poverty fall? Not on me. On you.

EDITH (*very gently*)—You need not be sorry for me, dear Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT—Ah, but I am! When I think of your sisters, the lives they lead! When I see other men getting on in the world! And I—what have I done? Nothing!

EDITH—You have made a woman love you.

CUTHBERT—Oh, and I'm grateful! If I hadn't that! But I've a terrible fear at times that there must be something of pity in that love, Edie—something, almost, of contempt.

EDITH—Cuthbert! Pity, contempt! If I had not the deepest respect and admiration for you, there could be no love. You must not say such things; you must not think them. Not for an instant. My life is the same as that of millions of women, but most husbands are satisfied, and say that is all a woman is fit for. You have shared every burden of mine, as far as a man could share it; and therefore it has been no burden, but only a labor of love. You have given me all that a man can give to his wife, except luxury; and that I don't need.

CUTHBERT—Put it as you will, my poor child, it's drudgery all the same, monotonous, incessant drudgery; and why should you be a drudge, you? Why should you have to bear all the labor of the house?

EDITH—Ah, the dear little house! I look after it, yes; it's my toy, my plaything. So much of it is the work of my hands and yours! There's not a pretty thing in it that does not stand for happy walks in the evening, when we pondered and hesitated, could we afford to buy it or no. This wall paper that we put up ourselves, the bookcase, the brackets you carved, the curtains I made—oh, Cuthbert, this house is so intimately of us, so truly our home, that it would have wrung my soul to leave it! We came here together after our honeymoon—we have lived in it ever since—and I thought we had both been happy—

CUTHBERT—Because of you, always you! Your management, your pinching and scraping, of which I see nothing! Just think what you might have done with the extra money!

EDITH—It would have been pleasant, of course—but, after all, are we so badly off? We live comfortably, we put a little by every year, we give our mite to the poor—Cuthbert, you have hurt me to-night—

CUTHBERT (*anxiously*)—Edie!

EDITH—Yes, you have hurt me. Why depreciate yourself? That wounds me. What if you do lack the faculty some men possess of making a great deal of money? Is money everything?

And shall you hang your head, call yourself a failure, because this appointment has gone to another man?

CUTHBERT—I was his senior, you see—I had a claim—

EDITH—And then? It's for me you are sorry, you say. Do you think I care? When we play our duets together, when we talk of the books we have read, don't you think I value that more than if you made millions, and, when you came home, could speak of nothing but stocks and shares? Oh, be as ambitious as you like—and you have power, you can do far more than you think—but within these four walls, in our home, you, husband and father, have achieved a great deal. A very great deal. And you must not think otherwise. I will not endure it.

CUTHBERT—Edie—

EDITH—No, I will not endure it! Ah, I know Hilda shakes her head, and talks of poor Edie! She calls me one-eyed. I never have a "good time," she says. A good time! Do I want to invite smart young men to tea, do that dreary daily round of receptions, and talk scandal with other women? Do I yearn to play bridge and ping-pong?—Don't be sorry for me, Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT—Oh, Hilda's not so far out! Your life is all work—work, work, from morning till night. And what can I do for you?

EDITH—Nothing but love me. We love each other, you and I. We are not like some husbands and wives, who think a holiday no holiday unless they spend it apart. We don't want to flirt with other men and women. You don't see my wrinkles—you don't notice that my complexion has faded—

CUTHBERT—It hasn't!

EDITH—You see? Your love throws a kind of glamour around me. Nothing in this world gives a woman more happiness than that. You are not only my husband—you are my lover. I look forward to your coming, night after night, as eagerly as in the first days. You give me the same little attentions and courtesies as when we were engaged. I try to dress prettily, to please

you. I make my own dresses, and the work is pleasant, because it is done for you. We love each other; and in this great, foolish world, that is the one thing that counts. Is it not?

CUTHBERT—Yes, yes, my darling, yes! But still you can't think how glad I should have been to be able to relieve you a little! To give you a little more leisure! Have a nurse, so that at least you might be spared the children about you all day!

EDITH—The children?

CUTHBERT—The appalling weariness of it. From morning till night! Ah, you've said nothing of them!

EDITH—Hush, hush— No, I have said nothing of the children, your children and mine, the children you gave me, our three sons— I spend the whole day with them; yes, and day after day; I have no nurse, and desire none— Some women may consider this drudgery. Let them! I am your children's nurse, I am their mother; when they came into the world they lay on my breast, and I fed them; they are mine, all mine and yours; no one came between us. And as then I nourished their body, so do I now feed their heart and brain on all that is best in me— I give what I have— I teach them, they teach me more— I watch their tender minds throw out shoots, day after day; I watch them expand, develop— They need me; and I am there, I give— These three sons of ours, yours and mine, shall, God willing, grow into fine, noble men; and shall I not have done my very good part? Am I to be pitied, do you think, I who make men?

CUTHBERT (*wonderingly*)—Edie!

EDITH—I, with my husband and children, my rich, full life? I, the happiest woman on earth!

CUTHBERT (*throwing his arms around her*)—Edie, Edie!

EDITH (*arising, and placing her hands on his shoulders*)—The happiest woman on earth! Are you not the real husband, the lover, the one man who has made my heart beat? Is your kiss not as sweet to me to-day as it was in our honeymoon? I loved you before

our children were born— How much more do I love you now, in them and through them! Cuthbert, Cuthbert, let us never speak of these things again. They are too sacred. You were unhappy—I have let you look into my soul. And, oh, my dear one, let us be content with this great joy of ours, and ask nothing more, lest what we have be taken; and nothing the world has to

offer could atone for what we have, we two—our children, our great and wonderful love—

*(For a moment they stand face to face, looking into each other's eyes; then Cuthbert kisses her almost reverently on the lips, and Edith returns to her chair, and resumes her sewing.)*

CURTAIN.



## THE SOWING

NOW garden fires curl blue smoke  
Where late in Autumn weather,  
The sear brown leaves came tumbling down  
In dreary gusts together.  
And now the mold is broke, and seed,  
Their wondrous secret keeping,  
Fall, where the alchemy of God  
Can wake them for the reaping.

O, by all secret thrills that run  
To call the seeds to growing;  
And all the winds and warmth of sun  
That nurse the buds to blowing,  
And by that magic breath that decks  
This old world as an altar,  
In honor of its guiding power  
I cannot doubt or falter.

Blend Thou, in time, with broken soil,  
This weary soul and body,  
And mix this dust with secret wine—  
This dryness and this shoddy—  
Mayhap earth's cool and dampened breast  
For it new life is keeping  
A new green world of tenderness,  
A waking after sleeping.

THEODORE DREISER.

# TO LOVE OR NOT TO LOVE

By Edgar Saltus

THAT is the question. The trouble is, don't you see, that sometimes you cannot quite answer it in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. You are handicapped by the fact that you are not, don't you know, what is called a free agent. What is worse, experiments may have induced in you the idea that love is a mistake.

So it is. But a very agreeable mistake, particularly when accompanied by entire reciprocity from the other party. It is in the absence of just such reciprocity that the question arises. When it does it may keep you awake.

In cases of this kind, we have, in our private practice, obtained excellent results from a regimen composed of fresh faces. The regimen has the merit of distracting the patient and of distracting also the other party. Though not, of course, in the same way. The patient discovers that love returns to the heart as the leaf returns to the tree. The party of the second part discovers that this leaving is highly insolent.

For, you see, while we none of us may care overmuch for an affection which happens to offer itself, yet, let that affection offer itself elsewhere, and we are ready to call the police. It is sheer robbery, isn't it? Which goes to show—don't you think?—that love is the affection of some one else. When you are cocksure of it your own is seldom involved.

Love is an asset. The value of any asset is appreciable only when lost. Hence the efficacy of the regimen. It demonstrates to both parties that there are others. Patients never really realize how healthy they are until they find

that out. But until they do they may develop very distressing symptoms, such, for instance, as slamming doors, making a fuss, writing interminable and vituperative letters. Yet when they do, instead of any vulgarity of that kind, they become simply charming, and effect an exit graceful, red-heeled, *régence*, the exit of those departing with civil and insincere regrets to boudoirs more hospitable. Which, of course, to the party of the second part is simply insulting.

This method, however, is one which we always hesitate to recommend until other lodgings have been taken. To be off with the old love before you are on—and well on—with the new, resembles nothing so much as a flight in the desert. Though now and then the desert is the lesser of two wildernesses. In the absence of reciprocity, you are apt to find things rather dull. *Mais l'on se fait à tout*. There are patients whom no dullness will down; patients who continue to care in spite of everybody and everything; patients who do not themselves know why they care, but who, nevertheless, persist in caring.

When consulted in a case of this nature we have found it serviceable to ascribe it to a disturbance of the vasomotor nerves of the *cœliac viscera*—a diagnosis which, while reasonably vague, is always satisfactory, and even reassuring. Patients know at once that they are not going to die. What they never know is that it is not in their power to elect to love or not to.

They are not free agents. We none of us are. It is true we think otherwise. The idea flatters us, and that does us no harm. On the contrary, an

agreeable illusion is highly hygienic. The illusion of free will is induced by the fancy that at any moment we can act as we see fit. Apparently so we may. In the appearance is the illusion. For we always forget to remember that within us are numberless little cells which, through numberless little currents, create our wishes, ambitions, aspirations, and with them our hopes, our fears, our sorrows and our loves.

We fancy that we are our own masters. It is these little things that master us. They do it so easily, too. We know what we want, but forget or ignore whence the wanting arises. The source of the want is not mental, but fundamental. We think otherwise, and there is the illusion. It is uplifting and wholesome. Yet it consists but in this, that while we are aware of our desires we are ignorant of the causes by which those desires are produced.

There you have the explanation of every inexplicable affair. The perfectly conscious cells intimate to the entirely unsuspecting patient that the party of the second part is the one party in all the world for him. Or, as it may be, for her. When similar cells similarly actuate the other party, two hearts there are that beat as one. You get cards for the wedding. Later, perhaps, you get curious about the divorce. Affections are like anything else. They wear out.

That, too, is due to the cells. They may urge the patient to try it again with some one else; or, instead of actuating the patient, they may actuate the other party. They have been even known to actuate both. When, of course, in that which we think we have seen described as the Eyes of the World, the delinquents are no better than they ought to be.

But any such judgment, while perfectly human, is passably absurd. Virchow remarked that it does not depend on ourselves to be constant or inconstant. Virchow was rather abused for his pains. But, then, it is a gracious providence that has enabled us to condemn whatever we do not understand. This subject is a case in point. For, don't you see, if the patient tries it on

with somebody else, as of course he must if the cells so urge him, it is not in the least the poor devil's fault. On the other hand, if he do nothing of the kind, as of course he will not if the cells omit to impel him, his constancy is not to his credit in the least. Which rather shows—don't you think?—the stupidity of blame and approval.

And rather shows also the vanity of earthly affections. For when it so happens that the patient, instead of leaving, gets left, vain will affections seem, cruelly vain, torturesomely vain, until consolation is found elsewhere than in the dictionary. Yes, indeed, when it is! But until it is, the loss of health, wealth and even of umbrellas is inappreciable by comparison with the defection of the heart's desire.

Said Alfred de Vigny: "The one real misfortune is the absence of the well-beloved." Said Edwin Arnold: "Affliction comes from affection." These statements are not novel. They are condensations of the sayings of sages and of seers. But we none of us, don't you know, are able to look at things quite in that light until some party of the second part goes back on us. Then we are not only able to see them in that light, but in a lot of supplementary lights as well. In lights of every shade of blue, from deepest indigo to palest azure.

And here is something else. We are indebted for it to Soularly. Said Soularly: "Of all dissolvents the most active is love." Add that statement to the others, and in examining the sum total it may perhaps occur to you that there is a mistake somewhere, a stitch dropped from the scheme of things—in the scheme for these latitudes at least; though, elsewhere, it may be, matters are better ordered.

In heaven, for instance. We know several women, and, come to think of it, we know also a few men who are eager to get into the upper circles if only because there is no marrying and giving in marriage there. That is all wrong. Matrimony should be so ordered here as to be quite delightful. And it might be were it not for the

climate. It is the climate that is at fault. Here is an agreeable instance:

Sometime ago a young man fell head over heels in love with a pretty girl, and not merely with one pretty girl, but with two pretty girls, both of whom, if you please, were dead gone on him. Now what do you suppose the cormorant did? Do you suppose that he tossed up, married one, and broke the heart of the other? Not a bit of it. He married both, and all three lived in a state of ideal happiness ever after.

But this happened in Cathay, where civilization is older, and therefore, perhaps, more advanced than our own. In England a chap who did a thing of that kind might, if he were very civil to the judge, get three months. In the States it would be ten years, two mothers-at-law, and dreadful cuts in the papers.

The Orient is less formal. There a lady is a chattel. Moreover, the multiplication of her in wedlock has the sanction of religion. It has a reason psychologic as well. In a temperate climate, and ours is that when it does not happen to be the reverse, there are, relatively speaking, as many women as men. But in countries in which the climate is enervating there is always a generous supersufficiency of girls. The result is obvious. A man gets more than his share. It is the climate that he has to thank. Ours is not of that kind. Though at afternoon teas we have had cause occasionally to think otherwise, and enjoyed it very much. Even so it is only a freebooter who would presume to confuse the possibilities of a tea party with the comforts of home. Besides which, in this part of the planet, long since it has been demonstrated that one wife is as good as a feast. There is much that might be added. But we stop right here. Discretion is the better part of literature and, parenthetically, of matrimony, too.

So there you are. If by any chance you are unable to hit it off with one party, and by no chance are allowed to try your luck with two, what are you going to do about it? Publicly we cannot, of course, advise. But in our

private practice we have felt frequently justified in recommending the cultivation of an earnest indifference.

That is the one way in which you can thwart the malefic influence of the cells. Indifference has another merit. It is very fetching. The one thing that even generous natures cannot stand is the idea that you want something of them. Personally, when we are placed in juxtaposition with a generous nature, we never fail to request the lady to refuse us everything. It is extraordinary what an emollient effect the modesty of that request will have. It is as well, though, to get your bearings beforehand. There are natures that will take you at your word. But that is because they are indifferent also. In which case you and the lady may become sister souls, and enjoy all the pleasures of platonism.

Platonism is very nice. It has a defect, however. When one of the parties to it does not lose her head the other loses his temper. And there you are back again in the cells from which we started.

From these cells, there is but one other issue. Blanqui found it. Blanqui was in love, desperately, violently, and not with a bundle of fluff, either, but with a goddess; with the real, yet chimerical, goddess whose name is Liberty. To cure him of the distemper he was jailed. But though his body was chained his soul was free. Through the prison walls his spirit mounted sheerly, and bathed in space. There Venus flung to him the rays of her eternal youth, Mars the glint of his supernal wisdom. The Great Bear stretched to him his glittering paws. Before him the Chariot blazed along the slopes of the sidereal circuit, and presently he was chasing the comets which footballled from one planet to another, mauled by Saturn, buffeted by Jupiter, dodge in rags over the great gridiron, until, tripped by the centrifugal force, they are flung into the furrows of space where worlds foment.

In these gymnastics and glamuurs Blanqui so fully forgot the goddess that when the prison doors reopened he had



in his head a complete system of astronomy, and in his heart nothing whatever.

The story has a moral, as every proper story should have. It shows that in solitude you have the double advantage of being by yourself, and of not being with others. It is from others our misfortunes come. Kiss a girl who has a touch of coryza, and as sure as you are born you will have a cold in your head. In solitude you are spared all that. Yet in solitude people have gone crazy, though obviously only because their brains were insufficiently furnished. In society assassinatable bores save themselves from anything of the kind by herding together, by considering their position, if you please, and asking each other to dine. It is their way of forgetting that they, too, are prisoners, as we all are, though it be but of hope or of love.

To be rid of the latter, there is, apart from the prescriptions which we have indicated, but one safe course, and that is in the oblivion of self, which Blanqui effected. Only when from that oblivion you emerge, look out that there is no divinity, or, what amounts to the same thing, no bundle of fluff in waiting.

Yet if there be, take her—providing, of course, you have her permission—in your arms, and in that attitude reflect that, whether you be true or quite the reverse, she also and *vice versa*; that whether, jointly and severally, you succeed in making yourselves blissfully beatific or unutterably bored; that whatever you do or leave undone, and however you decide the question which we have taken for text; reflect, that no matter what happens, neither of you can help it, and, even otherwise, it will be all the same a hundred years hence.

## TWELL DE NIGHT IS PAS'

ALL de night long twell de moon goes down,  
 Lovin' I set at huh feet,  
 Den fu' de long jou'ney back f'om de town,  
 Ha'd, but de dreams mek it sweet.

All de night long twell de break of de day,  
 Dreamin' agin in my sleep,  
 Mandy comes drivin' my sorrers away  
 Axin' me, "Wha' fu' you weep?"

All de day long twell de sun goes down,  
 Smilin', I ben' to my hoe,  
 Fu' dough de weddah git nasty an' frown  
 One place I know I kin go.

All my life long twell de night has pas'  
 Let de wo'k come ez it will,  
 So dat I fin' you, my honey, at las',  
 Somewhah des ovah de hill.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

# THE USUAL THING

By Elizabeth Knight Tompkins

"DON'T I know you?" Margaret asked. The distinguished-looking stranger was standing beside her at the rail, an unmistakable look of recognition on his indefinitely familiar face.

"I know you, Miss Hammond," he answered, with a smile, which, by some obscure association, took her back to Atterbury and the days of her prosperous youth. A dawning recognition was in her eyes as he continued: "I remember how proud I was the day my father let me wait on your mother. It was the first week I was regularly in the store."

"Oh!" exclaimed Margaret, keeping with difficulty a touch of regret, almost of dismay, out of her voice. It was not in this sphere of her recollections that she had sought for him. The picture rose before her of the low-studded, dark, little dry-goods store, to which, as a child, it was her delight to be taken. She remembered kindly, ungrammatical old Mr. Thompson and the handsome boy, his son, to whom she had lost her little girl's heart. In the visits that she had made to the town in later years, after their misfortunes had overtaken them, she had been disappointed to find a magnificent, new four-story department store in its place. Old Thompson, so she was told, was dead, and his son reigned in his stead and prospered beyond his father's dreams. These visions passed through her brain so quickly that there was no perceptible pause before she said:

"And so you are Willy Thompson? I remember you perfectly. Your face has puzzled me ever since we sailed."

"I knew you instantly," he returned. "You have not changed at all."

"That is the compensation for looking

mature at sixteen," she answered. "One still looks only mature at thirty-five. Sit down here, and tell me all about yourself," she continued, with more cordiality than she usually put into her manner; for those old days and everything connected with them were precious to her. Besides, she was vaguely anxious lest he should ask her for an account of her own fortunes.

"You know my father is dead," he began.

"So I heard, with regret," she answered. "I remember him so well. He was a prominent figure in my childhood in the days before Atterbury outgrew itself, when everybody knew everybody else. It often seems to me that I have never bought such reliable things anywhere else," she added.

"We always try to see that our customers get their money's worth," her companion replied, with the first touch of the complacent, prosperous tradesman that Margaret had seen about him. She shrank inwardly. It was too bad; his whole appearance was so unsuggestive of that sort of thing. "We always have the best grade of goods, and the best people in Atterbury patronize us. There is always a long string of carriages in front of the shop in the mornings. But is it long since you were in Atterbury, Miss Hammond?"

"Nearly five years, five years at Christmas."

"Well, you wouldn't know the place. Really, Miss Hammond, its growth is phenomenal. The property on which the store is has doubled in value in five years, and the trade has more than doubled. The manufactures have brought so much wealth into the town; there is much more style, more society

life. And lots of wealthy Atterbury people buy everything of us instead of going to Boston. We have a dress-making and a tailoring department. It was only the day I left that Mrs. Alexander said to me—you remember Mrs. Alexander, Miss Hammond? She said: 'Really, Mr. Thompson, I can always suit myself here at your store better than in New York.' You see, we import directly. I come over every summer and get everything of the latest."

"How it would have astonished your father," Margaret said, with an inward sigh. So this was what Willy Thompson had become! As a boy, he had seemed so much above his position in life.

"Yes, indeed, the dear old governor! I wish he were alive to see it," he replied, with a touch of feeling in his voice that almost made her forgive his previous speech. She would have expected the maker of it to be ashamed of his homely old father. "Wasn't he a fine old man, Miss Hammond?" he went on. "I am proud to be his son. His mere word was as good as another man's bond. Often and often he used to say to me: 'Will, if you've got to cheat anybody, cheat yourself.'"

"Indeed, he was all that and more," Margaret returned, warmly. "He had such a sincere love for his fellow creatures that it was a delight to him to do anything for them. He never allowed any distinctions to be made between customers. I remember my mother's expressing her pleasure once that she was made to wait her turn while a ragged old negress and a shabby little errand girl from a dressmaker's were being served."

"I try to keep the same rule, but it's hard to enforce with such an army of clerks as we have now; they will take the best dressed first. But it isn't every rich woman who would be pleased at that, Miss Hammond. There are some valuable customers of ours who flounce out of the store if they are not waited on the minute they come in. But Mrs. Hammond was always our idea of a perfect lady."

By the time Margaret left him to go

down to Mrs. Fergusson, Willy Thompson had almost effaced the bad impression he had made at starting. He had talked simply and unpretentiously about the days when Atterbury had been a mere village and the Hammonds the most important people in it, betraying with no false pride the awe that they had inspired in him. No people in after years had ever seemed so important. He had even confessed, in an indirect way, with a delicacy she would not have expected, that she herself had been an object of the greatest interest to him in the days when he was first promoted to wait in the store. Margaret felt no desire to make any admissions in return, but the idea amused her. It was interesting to discover after all these years that her youthful infatuation had been returned. She enjoyed their talk; it was a pleasant experience to feel herself of consequence again; for, in Mr. Thompson's eyes, she had evidently lost none of the prestige that had been her native atmosphere all the early days of her life. It was a long time since she had been treated with distinction by any except absolute strangers. With them her external appearance of being a person of consequence prevailed only until they discovered her real status of secretary and traveling companion to Mrs. Fergusson.

That lady and the third member of their party, her niece, Maymie Joyce, continued sick for several days, too sick to care for any companion except the stewardess, so Margaret and her old-new friend had many opportunities for talk. He soon fell into the habit of spending with her all the time that the children on board, with whom he had made friends, would let him have to himself. Margaret herself was half ill with a cold, but she preferred the certainty of increasing it on deck to being shut up in a cabin with Maymie Joyce, and a very sick Maymie Joyce at that. Willy, as she called him to herself, did most of the talking. Taking her interest for granted in the unsophisticated way that formed so strange a contrast with his man-of-the-world appearance, he poured forth his whole history, tell-

ing of the ambitions that had filled his head as a boy; that beautiful boy's head with its cameo coloring and other-world expression which she remembered so well. The coloring was still beautiful, but the expression was quite different. Willy had, so he said, chafed at his father's conservatism and lack of enterprise, and had resolved that he would be worth a quarter of a million before he was forty. That was the goal that he had set before his eyes; a quarter of a million dollars meant success to him. He did not try to check the pride in his tone as he mentioned that he had reached his goal before he was even thirty-five. Thompson's should be replaced by the handsomest store in Atterbury. All the city specialties, such as white sales in January and bargain sales in July, should be reproduced there. He would have floor walkers clad in frock coats—Prince Alberts, he called them—elevator boys in brass buttons, pretty girls in black gowns and much curled hair at the glove and ribbon counters. All his dreams had come true, and his heart was filled with a pride and thanksgiving that he made no effort to conceal. He took his companion's applause for granted.

In his marriage, Willy, now a widower of two years' standing, had also attained what he considered success. He had married the daughter of a small manufacturer, who had brought with her a little money and great social ambitions of a cheap kind. At this point was produced a photograph with "Will from Edythe" inscribed on the back in a huge, unformed, angular hand. It was the picture of a pretty girl with elaborately dressed hair, the figure clad in an intricate and wonderful gown, the face, through its prettiness, betraying the pettiness of the mind, the emptiness of the soul within. From his stateroom were also brought photographs of the house he had built on Atterbury Heights, in which, as he pointed out with pride, every room was furnished with a gas grate and opened widely into the next, making the first floor practically one room—very satisfactory for entertaining.

"I should not like it so well for everyday living, which is so much more of one's life than entertaining," Margaret ventured to remark. "And don't you like the cheer of open fires?" she added.

But it seemed that Mrs. Thompson never liked them, they made so much dirt and trouble; and also that everybody has gas grates nowadays. He and his wife had evidently lived harmoniously together, but her loss had not overwhelmed him. Indeed, as he gradually revealed in the intoxication of pouring forth his full heart to an attentive listener, she had taken no interest in his business schemes, and had been absolutely absorbed in her own delicate health. He naïvely informed Margaret that he was anxious to marry again.

After a little she found herself trying to influence him in various ways. He told her tales of his business life. One day he had gone into the Atterbury County Bank to borrow two thousand dollars for a couple of days. The cashier had met his request by saying that he should have to consult the president of the bank. Willy had what he called "flounced" out of the bank with the announcement that henceforth he should take all his business to the First National; he liked to deal with white men; he would take his wife's account out of the savings department the very next day. And since that time he had been the means of diverting at least a hundred thousand dollars from that bank. He had persuaded a number of his friends to transfer their accounts to the First National. All this was told with a security of her sharing his point of view, a certainty of her approbation that was infinitely strange to Margaret. By way of an experiment, she tried to make him see how small it appeared to her, to let him understand that there were people to whom there was no charm in the idea of getting even for blows to one's vanity.

There were other tales about their fellow townspeople, women whom Margaret had once known, showing the discrepancy between their business and their social sides. Willy, though he did

not know it, did not always come out well in these recitals. There was one about a certain wealthy woman who disputed every bill that was presented to her, and made so much trouble by her variability of mind and temper that he at length squared his account with her by playing a trick on her. Taking a clerk aside, he instructed him to sell her a scarf marked at one dollar and twenty-three cents for twenty-five dollars, representing that it was an imported novelty of the greatest rarity. In this there was apparently no greed for gain, merely a desire to pay the woman back.

Willy did not approve of boys going to college. A high school or business college education was all a man really needed nowadays, and a college man did not, in his experience, succeed as well as the man from the business colleges.

"We use words in such different senses," Margaret said at last, in despair of their ever understanding each other. "To you a man means simply a business man; you have no thought or concern for the part that lies beneath, that overlaps. And to you success means only one thing, the thing that to me does not mean success except in a very limited sense of the word." Willy's face looked blank.

"Listen to me," she said, going on to explain, as well as she could, what constituted success in her eyes: Mastery of one's self; banishing petty and ignoble motives from one's mind; thinking things out for one's self and weighing, often rejecting, conventional ideas as to the proper ordering of one's life; estimating material possessions at their true value; keeping sweetness and light in one's soul; never letting one's self be downed by circumstances; having the courage of one's beliefs, even of one's mistakes and follies; concerning one's self little with other people's opinion of one's self; trampling down vanity under foot, polishing the instrument of the mind until it did one's bidding, for the mere satisfaction of it apart from any definite money gain to be achieved.

It was Margaret's turn to do the

talking, and she expanded her ideas with a proselyting fervor that was new to her. Willy was a little bewildered. Evidently these thoughts, for all their lack of originality, were as new to him as his ideas had been to Margaret. She had known, of course, that business men had but one god, business success, but she had never before assisted at the invocations, the rites of worship.

"I am going to teach you a thing or two," she said; and, taking up each one of the stories he had told her, she applied to it the principles that governed her life—ideas that had not come to her spontaneously, but through contact with some one of whose life they were the inner springs of action and of being; not that he ever preached them; perhaps he never even formulated them to himself; he merely lived them.

Willy listened with interest to this wonderful new doctrine. The thought flashed into her mind that he was what he was because he had known nothing better, and the desire stirred in her to wrest this soul from the Philistines. The thought of making a man's nature over to match its outward presentation was stimulating. That he could learn was proved by her recollections of his vulgar mother and ungrammatical father; she marveled that their son could present to the world the outward appearance of a gentleman.

It was the night of this conversation that it first dawned upon her that Willy was thinking of her as a possible successor to his Edythe. The idea came as a shock to her pride, but she soon reasoned herself out of it. Who was she that he should not aspire to her? Evidently some of the old glamour hung about her for him. She had told him of her present occupation, but it had apparently made no impression upon him. Once a Hammond was always a Hammond in his eyes.

The first remark which he made to her the next day, after he had inquired of her cold, enabled her to score a small triumph for her cause.

"I know why you don't think much of business men," he began. "I don't wonder, either. It was a business man

who was responsible for the loss of your money. Now I am sure you would like to get even with him."

"I have forgotten his name. I had even forgotten that any one was to blame," she answered, simply.

Willy's manner became so marked before the morning was over that Margaret took a resolution. She would stay downstairs and nurse her cold for the rest of the voyage, and give herself time to think. She must have a day on shore, time to make a little experiment, before she committed herself even to any further friendliness. It caused her no surprise that he had arrived at a decision so quickly; it must be an intoxicating experience for a man who had only known Edythes to come in contact with a woman who could meet him on equal terms, a woman with whom his bond was not merely the primeval one.

Her resolution was the easier to carry out that Maymie was well enough to come on deck that afternoon. Margaret introduced her to Willy, who evidently regarded her intrusion on their *tête-à-tête* with impatience. Maymie was an Edythe girl, pretty, silly and trivial. Margaret did not wonder that he was tired of the type. In the middle of the afternoon she retired to her berth with a very sore chest and a croak in her voice.

Maymie was enthusiastic about her new acquaintance when she came down to dress for dinner. Wasn't he the handsomest thing! And so well dressed! That overcoat of his was the swellest thing she'd ever seen. He had talked to her for a long time, chiefly about Miss Hammond. Why hadn't Miss Hammond told her about their grand place at Atterbury and all the elegant things she used to have?

"I don't know. It never occurred to me to," Margaret answered. Evidently the mental attitude that could forget to mention one's own glories, past or present, was inconceivable to Maymie. Margaret saw that Maymie thought she was lying, but did not care. She felt really ill, and her one desire was that Maymie should finish her dressing and her chattering and clear out. Neverthe-

less she was forced to hear a great deal about Mr. Thompson in the next few days. Willy himself she saw only on the morning of their arrival in New York. Saying that he had business that would keep him in town for some little time, he asked for her address and permission to call in a way that she felt was intentionally significant. Margaret refused to set a time, saying that he would probably find her at home any afternoon towards the end of the week. Her good-bys with Maymie and Mrs. Fergusson, whose need of her services was over, were easily said.

That same afternoon found her knocking at the door of a studio in Washington Square. It was after five o'clock and the twilight of the short October day was gathering in. There was the first suggestion of winter in the air. As she had expected at that hour, she found Philip Starr at home. His sitter had gone with the daylight, and he was putting some finishing touches to the background of a portrait. He was so frankly glad to see her that it hurt. Philip's unvarying kindness and affection gave her one of the most acute pains she had to endure.

"I have such lots of things to tell you that I can hardly wait to hear your adventures," he began, when they had discussed his work for some minutes. He led her to the divan and sat down beside her, still holding her hand. His rugged face was lit by the all-illuminating smile that transformed it from rather an ugly mask into the outward presentation of a beautiful soul. "I have been wondering every day if you wouldn't turn up some time in the course of it. I even stopped one day to ask Mrs. Spaulding when she expected you, but the lady was out and the maid didn't know."

"But you've got to let me talk," Margaret protested. "I've got to make up my mind about something right away, and I want to talk it out with you."

"Oh, I see, a man! Hang him!" he exclaimed. "Well, fire ahead, and get the worst over. Don't keep me in suspense if you're going to tell me I'm to lose you."



She told her little story, beginning back in the old Atterbury days.

"And you think the fellow wants to marry you?" he asked, when she paused.

"I feel sure of it," she answered. "You see it represents success to him to marry into one of the old Atterbury families, even though it has fallen so far from its high estate. He likes me very much, and I hold his interest in representing a type of woman so different from any he has known. He is so inexperienced that he thinks I am much more clever and original than I really am. He doesn't know that many of my ideas are in the air, that I have picked them up. He thinks I have created them."

"Don't you mind his position, or lack of it?" Philip asked, abruptly.

"You wouldn't yourself in my place," she retorted.

"No; but then I am not an aristocrat at heart. All of your knocking about hasn't taken that out of you. Be honest, Peggy, and confess."

"Well, then, I do mind," she answered, defiantly. "I mind so much that I am ashamed of myself. It is contrary to all my beliefs. But then, you see, I mind things in my present life still more, cheap boarding houses pervaded with the odor of cooking, for instance."

"I can't believe it!" he exclaimed. "You would never marry for money, or for a home—I am sure of that!"

"Listen to me and don't speak till I finish. I will tell you the whole story," she began. "I see Willy Thompson absolutely as he is. I haven't an illusion. There are things about him that make me shiver, but they are not essentials. I feel sure that a woman of tact (perhaps you didn't know I was a woman of tact?) could modify them so that they wouldn't count for anything. And I like him, I like him thoroughly. His good looks appeal to me. I love to look at him. And in many ways he has such a nice nature, kindly and simple. The only place where he is really objectionable is in his pride in his business success, and that, you see, could be reached by making him realize that there are

other things that are more truly success. I wish you could have seen him with some children and some deadly maiden ladies on board ship. And he had so strong an affection for his father and mother. And he is interested in books; he devoured everything I had and asked for more, and said such sensible things about them. Oh, I feel sure one could do almost anything with him. To tell the truth, what first moved me was a craving to enlarge his horizon. I positively long to open his eyes to some of the truths I have learned—chiefly from you, Philip," she added. But Philip was not to be mollified.

"But you surely wouldn't marry for anything of that sort," he interrupted, disregarding her injunction, horrified incredulity in his tone.

"I don't know," she answered, boldly. "Really, Philip, I am tired of the struggle; it terrifies me that I have got to begin it again this winter. You know I have no business ability. Much as I need money, I can't make myself care about it, and I take my pupils too cheap and let them go too easily. I have actually told two mothers that it was a waste of time to let their children keep on with their German, and I can't make myself do differently. What have I to look forward to? What will my old age be? Then, too, why should I deny myself everything because I can't have the one perfect thing? If you knew the pleasure I should take in a home of my own! How I should revel in the sense of security, of being sheltered and protected! I loathe going out in the world and having business dealings with people. It often seems to me nowadays that perfect happiness for me would lie in having to take no thought for the morrow, what I shall eat or drink or wherewithal I shall be clothed, that it would lie in harmonious surroundings and the material comforts of life, in being free to live my own life."

"Ah, but you wouldn't be free," Philip protested. "You have never been so little free in your life. Do you really think that you can marry this Willy Thompson, take all he has to give you, and then shove him aside into corners?

You would find that the pangs of conscience were worse than the pangs of hunger."

"But he wouldn't be very troublesome. You don't know him, Philip. He is affectionate, but not at all ardent. Besides, he is absorbed in his business. I am sure he would trouble me very little."

There was a pause before Philip spoke. Margaret was afraid that he would hear her heart beat.

"If you feel that way about it, I suppose there is nothing else to do," he said at length. "But I wish it didn't have to be; I don't mean on my own account—I couldn't be jealous of a Willy Thompson—but because it seems a desecration. Needless to ask, you will be honest with him?"

"Of course. You see, it isn't as if he were really in love with me."

She drew a long breath, and then went on in a voice full of suppressed passion: "How I wish I could see myself as others see me for five minutes! I have the most intense desire to know why it is that men do not fall in love with me. I am much better looking than many women with whom they fall madly in love; I am clever and broad-minded; I am warm-hearted and human; I am not vain or conceited; I can laugh as well as cry. Do you know, I have always felt that I was a woman for a fine man to love with all his heart, but no fine man has ever loved me. I get friendship in abundance, affection, esteem, the love that lacks the divine fervor; but the real thing, never. Two men have wanted to marry me, but I hadn't the slightest difficulty in converting them into friends. Both married, within a year, women with whom they were madly in love, my inferiors in every respect, and have tacitly thanked me many times since for my kindness in refusing them. It is very strange. No, Philip, my dear, you are not to make any remarks. This is a soliloquy, not a dialogue."

"Well, then, the next time I see you I'll tell you that I've had hard work not to fall in love with you a number of times."

Margaret laughed a little bitterly.

"Ah, but you could help doing it! Don't you see that is just my grievance?"

Philip laughed, too.

"Poor girl!" he said. "At all events you don't have to be always losing your friends by such complications," he added.

"But friends are just what I don't care about," she exclaimed, involuntarily, dropping her face on her arms again. When she raised it, there was a tear in each eye.

"I suppose I see myself all wrong," she said. "No doubt I am absolutely different to what I think I am. The mystery is probably no mystery at all. If I could only know! I'd take the pain if I once could get at the truth. Oh, for a mirror for one's real self!"

"I don't believe we could tell any more from that than we can from an everyday mirror," he remarked. "Do you know what you really look like? I don't. When I look in the glass I seem to myself irredeemably hideous, and yet I know I am not, or people would treat me differently."

"Ah, but one thinks only of the light that shines out from within!" she exclaimed.

"How nice of you to say that!" he exclaimed, taking her hand and holding it between both his. "You see I am not so proud as you are. When I make disparaging remarks about myself, I am terribly disappointed if some one doesn't contradict them." Margaret drew her hand away.

"I must go," she said, sadly, without noticing his words. "I shall be late to dinner if I stay any longer, and that is a crime."

"Are you going to marry your Willy?" he demanded.

"If he asks me—yes."

"Well, if you think it is the right thing for you to do, I suppose it is the right thing. Willy won't make you throw me over, I hope, though these country husbands have aboriginal ideas."

"If I marry, I shall give you up," Margaret returned, with decision. She

did not give any reason, and he did not ask for any. He went to the door with her, and shook hands again.

"I'm terribly fond of you, Peggy," he said.

To her surprise, Willy did not come to see her that week, although she stayed at home Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Margaret had time to get very uncomfortable. She could not settle to any work, but spent most of her time behind her window curtain watching the street. It was not until the following Thursday that he appeared.

"I was beginning to think that you had left town," she said, as she joined him in the stiff, much-adorned boarding-house parlor. She was not surprised to see that he was ill at ease, and resolved to help him out all she could. He did not approach the point immediately, but made conversation for several minutes. He was unmistakably nervous.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" she asked, to avert a threatened pause.

"I have been seeing a great deal of Mrs. Fergusson and Miss Joyce," he answered, to her surprise. "Charming girl, Miss Joyce," he continued.

"So many people think," Margaret answered, diplomatically.

Willy laughed a nervous laugh. His manner was certainly very unnatural.

"I don't see how they can help it. To tell the truth, Miss Hammond, I am sure you will be pleased; I felt that you must be one of the first to know, since my father always admired all your family so much, and you are so fond of her—the truth is, Miss Joyce and I are engaged." Margaret did not move a muscle or betray surprise in any way.

"I am sure you will be very happy," she said, cordially. "You are so well suited to each other." Willy heaved a sigh of relief. "You must invite me to visit you some time," she added.

"There is nobody we should be prouder to have," he returned, effusively, recovering his ease of manner. A few minutes later he took his leave, being anxious to get back to his Maymie.

Margaret climbed the two long flights of stairs to the hall bedroom that she called home.

"I suppose it served me right," she said, as she opened her door. Then the humor of the situation struck her. She flung herself down on her bed and laughed until she cried.

"I needn't have worried about those gas grates," she said, at length, "and I need not give up Philip," she added, with a smile for the happy thought.



## AN INTERLUDE

YESTERDAY, dear, the skies were gray,  
Ah, but why speak of yesterday—  
Gray will the morrow be again,  
Ah, why think of the morrow's pain?

Just for to-day the skies are fair,  
Just to-day may I laugh and dare  
Hold you close to my raptured breast,  
Just for to-day are joy and jest.

Love of mine, though the slow years spread  
Winding sheets for our gladness dead—  
The silence may not seem so long  
That bears remembrance of a song!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

## SOME DRAMATIC ODDITIES

By Alan Dale

WE are extremely fond of asserting, in mental quotation marks, that the unexpected always happens, but we rarely believe it until it really does happen.

We pin our faith to logical expectation and to our own little mortal theories of what should be.

This has been strikingly instanced during the current theatrical season. Managers, driven to desperation by a veritable eczema of failure—failure of that which, according to their theatrical logic, should have been success—have been confronted by this odd glorification of the unexpected.

Farce and farce-comedy, drama and melodrama, musical comedy and comic opera, works planned in New York, in London, in Paris, have, with singular insistency, proved inadequate. It is rare that such sweeping failure has been chronicled.

Critics, agog at this avalanche of surly mediocrity, have tried to lend a soothing hand and to help the painful season to peace and comfort. They have sought to console its aching bones by all means in their power. It was at this juncture that the unexpected loomed up.

Yes, it was unexpected. You may say that there was no reason why it should be. That is a remark one generally makes, just to save one's reputation for sagacity, as it were.

The fact is that nobody would have believed in the immediate and great pecuniary success of this particular case of the unexpected.

I refer to the revivals of "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The Merchant of Venice," works of one William Shakespeare, and of "The School for Scan-

dal," by the late Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

These revivals were made at the Lyric Theater by Miss Ada Rehan and Mr. Otis Skinner, and they were eminently delightful.

The splendid, dominant art of Miss Rehan, driven by adverse conditions to "the road," while little tuppenny-ha'penny stars have monopolized the metropolis, has never been more convincing, even in its heyday, while the elocutionary beauty of Mr. Skinner's method defied criticism.

Well may we ask ourselves why we dared to class this with the unexpected. The answer is easy. Of course, we knew that both Miss Rehan and Mr. Skinner were conspicuously worthy. Have we not recognized this for years?

We were not quite so certain, however, of our powers to appreciate worthiness. Our taste has been marred by the drivel and ineptitude foisted upon us. Our artistic perception has been weakened by the dramatic chills and fevers through which we have passed.

Yet it is most gratifying to record the fact that these really fine performances "touched the spot" in the metropolitan jungle. Crowds surged to the Lyric Theater to see the late Augustin Daly's "arrangement" of "The Taming of the Shrew," and we were quite delighted with ourselves.

We knew we were approving of the right thing; it put us on good terms with our own judgment, and we said, triumphantly, "We know a good thing when we see one."

Miss Ada Rehan has never been in better form. In these days of rushlight "stars" we were able to realize their utter inadequacy as we watched this ac-

trepreneur, who reached the top of the ladder only after she had devoted years and years of arduous work to its lower rungs.

This dramatic treat used to be at our beck and call, and—as is usually the case with what we know we possess—we scarcely appreciated it at its real value. The curious spectacle of the New York public rushing to this presentation of "The Taming of the Shrew" seventeen years after its initial offering is fit to head any list of dramatic oddities, don't you think?

To our starved artistic sense, Miss Rehan and Mr. Skinner brought balm of Gilead. It was a relief to see a spirited, reverential and convincing performance of a Shakespearian comedy once more in these days of "Little Marys" and "Whitewashing Julias."

We leaned back in our chairs and enjoyed ourselves. To our jaded minds *Katherine*, the shrew, was inordinately amusing, and *Petruchio*, her tamer, a remarkable comedy contrivance. Even though this Shakespearian comedy be out of joint to-day, and the shock of watching haughty woman ungallantly assailed by non-chivalrous man may seem a trifle violent, we were not abashed. We gave it the seal of our distinct approval.

What a lesson to managers who have deemed us worthy only of vapid horse-play, of pompous expenditure, of frivolous and driveling, and snivel! What a pungent illustration of the fact that the best "goes," and that the policy of building up, rather than of knocking down, is the wiser, after all.

Two or three seasons ago a speculative effort was made to reintroduce Miss Rehan in a new play. The "old comedies" in which she had triumphed were not considered good enough. The effort was not successful. This admirable actress—perhaps the only real "star" in this country—languished. We began to forget her; we should probably have continued to do so if it had not been for this luminous case of the unexpected.

Let us try and believe in the unexpected! Let us credit the fact that we know some things, but not all. Let us

demolish the silly epigram announcing that "Shakespeare spells failure" as we put on our bonnets and shawls and sally forth to sample the delicatessen of Clyde Fitch.

Methodists think that the fate of these revivals at the Lyric Theater is the thin edge of a happy wedge. One feels optimistic and cheery. "Stars" that are "supers;" plays that cater to the lowest; wit culled from the taphouse; "smart" epigrams topsy-turvy morality; low comedians that emulate the tactics of the playful hyena, and the abominably personal monkey; drama redolent of beer dregs and cigar stumps—all these are bound to go.

A rain cloud no bigger than a man's hand is visible. The dramatic drought will be dispelled by splendid showers of artistic things. The unexpected always happens!

Four feminine "stars," than whom I could desire no better illustration of my remarks anent Miss Rehan, have claimed our attention, with four plays, four leading men, four companies and four opportunities for us to wonder at our fate.

These ladies were Miss Mary Mantering, Miss Amelia Bingham, Miss Virginia Harned and—last and best—Miss Annie Russell.

These four actresses, in other conditions, would be acceptable leading women. In stock companies they would be most useful, with distinct promise for the future. To-day they are "stars," quite disposed to assert themselves, if they deem it necessary, resentful of criticism and superciliously amazing. These remarks, in their entirety, may not apply to sweet little Annie Russell.

Miss Mantering came to the Garrick with a farce by Leo Ditrichstein, entitled "Harriet's Honeymoon." Mr. Ditrichstein called it a "comedy," and undoubtedly he intended it for one.

It was one of those little games of mistaken identity, monopolized almost exclusively by the stage, and it was written to fit a young woman who likes to run the "gamut" of the emotions, and who believes that she can make you weep just as effectively as she can make you laugh.

That being the case, this farce, cast in an atmosphere of medicinal waters, "in the Duchy of Saxenhausen," contained a few moans, a dash of bitters—almost as though it were a cocktail—and a sprinkling of agony. All this was designed, of course, to remove the stigma of mere farce.

The piece was not devoid of merit, however, being eminently respectable, destitute of tiresome episodes dealing with conjugal infidelity, and enlivened by some happy dialogue. Some of the Teutonic types introduced by Mr. Ditrichstein seemed comparatively new, and we smiled at such strange nomenclature as *Frau Secret-Court-Counsellor Miller* and *Frau Civic-Fire-Department-Sub-Superintendent Knoll*.

It was not humor of an ecstatically cordial brand, but it was gently entertaining, and this playwright, who is really much better as an actor, redeemed himself from the slough into which his "What's the Matter with Susan?" plunged him earlier in the season.

Miss Mannering, as a guileless, fragile young bride, could scarcely have seen herself as others saw her. It is a gift that so few actors seem to possess, alas! The "stars" of to-day never appear to own it, or even to desire it.

Miss Mannering is a comfortable, healthy, amiable, sophisticated person, who must secretly despise the type that we know as ingénue, but who feels impelled to impersonate it. She is quite as good as any of the modern, mushroom crop of "stellar" actresses, but the absurdity of naming her in the same class as Miss Rehan or Ellen Terry or Sarah Bernhardt convulses one.

Stars should be graded, but they are not. In astronomy—which is not my specialty—I believe that they are. There are fixed stars, stars of various magnitudes, double or multiple stars, telescopic stars.

In the theatrical firmament there are no groups. If Miss Tottie Coughdrop, who had to say, "A letter, sir," or, "My lord, the carriage waits," yesterday, chooses to engage a company to-day and blazon herself forth as *Lady Macbeth*,

she is a "star," and no chart is necessary to discover her whereabouts.

Personally, I detest the word "star" for theatrical usages, and write it merely as one writes many other words the significance of which has become obscured. The "twinkle, twinkle, little star" habit has grown so general that one has ceased to remember that it is not a case of "up above the world so high."

The second of my constellations is Miss Amelia Bingham, who came to town and to the Knickerbocker Theater with one of the strangest concoctions of the season. It was called "Olympe" and programmed as a "romantic drama," by Pierre Decourcelle, of Paris.

Evidently M. Decourcelle is a wise man in his generation, for he seems to have remained in Paris, happy, perhaps, in a blithe expectation of "royalties," without the horror of having to watch them in the pathetic process of being hatched.

Exactly why a most American person like Miss Bingham should see herself as *Mademoiselle Olympe de Cleve*, in the cloisters at Avignon, is one of those problems compared with which Ann's age is easy.

My experience has been that very English and very American actors love to dally with French, so that they can heap contumely upon an inoffensive language that can never retaliate. The "mossoos," and "m'dahms," and "mar-keeses," and "cheva-leers" with whom we are perpetually confronted in these transplanted French plays show us what havoc people can work with other tongues, if they are dared.

"Olympe" proved to be too ludicrous for serious discussion. It was possible only to ridicule it, and the possibility was not shirked, I am bound to admit. This laughable compound of Jesuit students and beautiful actresses never for one moment took hold of its astonished audience.

New Yorkers are used to viewing Miss Bingham in plays that announce her as maddeningly lovely, dazzlingly charming and scintillantly exquisite.

This actress likes to be pictured dramatically as the object of the hopeless



love of every male member of the cast. It seems to be a luxury that she can afford. She prefers to spend her money in that way, rather than to invest it in automobiles or brownstone mansions or cots by the sea.

As *Olympe* herself would probably remark, "*Chacun à son goût*," and her company would probably translate, "Everybody has the gout." There is certainly no accounting for taste.

Had "*Olympe*" been serious, we might have objected to the ruthless medley of cloister and stage. We might have suggested that the Jesuits be left out of the question, for the sake of those who do not care to see them there.

All that Miss Bingham needs in a play is something masculine to dote upon her. Why bother to journey to Avignon and to break in upon the cloisters just to fish out and land a poor little Jesuit? It was so unnecessary.

The rôle of *Olympe*, moreover, was manifestly miles out of Miss Bingham's ken. There are various things that this actress can do well, many that she has done well, but there are more that she should never essay. In the play at the Knickerbocker, in addition to displaying a pair of arms that a recalcitrant dress-maker evidently neglected to cover, she displayed limitations that were equally brawny.

Had one's life depended upon praising "*Olympe*," that praise would have been utterly impossible. Critics were glad that the ugly work of wholesale condemnation was spared them, and that they could lightly flick the puerile affair to the winds, in which direction it headed itself unwaveringly.

Constellation, No. 3: Miss Virginia Harned, in a sweetly conjugal effort to present a little thing dashed off by her actor-husband, E. H. Sothern, entitled "*The Light that Lies in Woman's Eyes*."

With this production we were introduced to the rather quaint idea of a successful actor "starring" his own wife in a "play" of his own making. The arrangement certainly sounds as though it should prove satisfactory, don't you think?

If a playwright doesn't know the dramatic limitations of his own wife, who should know them? The outsider? If so, why? In London certain playwrights have done brave things for their own better halves. Young H. V. Esmond has managed successfully to "present" Mrs. H. V. Esmond, who is Miss Eva Moore; R. C. Carton has been charmingly inspired by Mrs. R. C. Carton, who on the stage is known as Miss Compton.

So it would have been interesting, though not unprecedented, if Miss Virginia Harned, who is Mrs. E. H. Sothern, had successfully claimed attention in a play of Mr. Sothern's contrivance.

Alas! Sothern is a capable and hard-working actor, never luminous, but invariably meritoriously industrious, while as a playwright he is simply unadulterably grotesque. Nothing that has as yet been acted this season equaled "*The Light that Lies in Woman's Eyes*" for puerility, incoherence and absurdity.

Probably there was some mystery surrounding its production, the key to which has been kept from us. It is quite inconceivable that Mr. Frohman lent his name to this "attraction" because he thought that it was worth while.

I imagine that very frequently if we could catch a glimpse of the "wheels within wheels" we should be vastly edified. It would also be a great satisfaction to the "native dramatist." What must that mystic gentleman think, as he collects his own erring manuscripts, all labeled "declined with thanks," after a visit to such a play as "*The Light that Lies in Woman's Eyes*."

Mr. Sothern laid one of the scenes of his play in Shakespeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon, where he cast his "plot" in our teeth. And what a plot!

A blind girl, lamenting the loss of her lover, her health impaired by his absence; an Arctic explorer, with a voice like the missing lover, asked to impersonate that worthy for the sake of the blind girl's life; a titled "lady" who considers the scheme cruel and resolves to angle for that luckless Arctic explorer's love—there is your plot.

Mr. Sothern eked this out with Shakespearian quotations by the bushel,

quips supposed to be light, and a rehearsal of an open-air performance of "As You Like It," in the Forest of Arden. In this scene—dragged in presumably to afford Miss Harned the ever-coveted opportunity of wearing doublet and hose—poor old Shakespeare was routed. It suggested hallucination and delirium.

It might have been the work of an individual whose brain had run so persistently in the Shakespearian direction that it had finally enmeshed itself in incoherence.

Poor Shakespeare! It was a sorry affair. We have for some time been amiably interested in Sothorn's idea of Shakespeare, but what sensational reading Shakespeare's idea of Sothorn would make!

The pity, of course, is that this conscientious actor, who has made headway in his profession by sheer hard work, should be so willing to invite comment as an exceedingly inept playwright. It was his second "dramatic" effort.

His first, which was fully as destructive of valuable space as "The Light that Lies in Woman's Eyes," was called "Never Trouble Trouble Till Trouble Troubles You." Theater-going would, indeed, gain new troubles if one had to commit to memory the titles of plays visited. I would suggest as a simple, catchy legend for Mr. Sothorn's next: "Full Many a Flower Is Born to Blush Unseen and Waste Its Sweetness on the Desert Air." It would be so nice to say that one wanted to buy tickets for—all that!

Miss Harned has a pleasant and substantial personality and an exceedingly agreeable voice. There is nothing particularly stellar—viewed from the Ada Rehan idea—about this young woman. There is no distinctive quality about her acting, which, however, when quiet, is acceptable.

Of course, she would like to take up the emotions and dance jigs upon them. Her inability to do this was demonstrated in the particularly silly play I have just mentioned, and this was further seen some time ago in Pinero's "Iris." A sage adviser is what Miss

Harned needs far more than an actor-husband willing to let her disport herself in his own vagaries.

The list of feminine stars that I laid down for myself is now nearly complete, I am glad to say. It is not amusing to record these failures; it gives one creepy sensations.

Miss Annie Russell is the fourth and last of these constellations. This young woman, with a dainty, wistful, pathetic personality that nearly always moves one to admiration, has suffered this season, like many others, from the appalling lack of plays. At the Garrick Theater she produced "The Younger Mrs. Parling," by Haddon Chambers, from the French of Henri Bernstein.

There has never been a finer exponent of the "reluctant maiden," of ingenuous girlhood, than Annie Russell. Since the day, a good many years ago, when she carried New York tumultuously by her exquisite interpretation of *Elaine*, "the lily maid of Astolat," there has been a long list of pretty rôles to Miss Russell's credit.

The phrase, "An Annie Russell part," has passed into the professional vocabulary. "An Annie Russell part" is one that depicts a white-muslin girl, unsophisticated and tender, gazing out amazingly into this wicked world.

Miss Russell herself has grown tired of these rôles. Her ambition has taken the strange course that prompts her to yearn for work that is beyond her charming scope. It is the sort of ambition that impels Mr. "Nat" Goodwin to toy with Shakespeare, that urges tragedians to be comedians and moves the man with one talent to covet another. This sort of thing is not new. The dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail rushing blindly on might point a moral.

In "The Younger Mrs. Parling," an extraordinarily "talky" exposition of conjugal incompatibility, Annie Russell probably liked her rôle, and we didn't! The spectacle of this little woman craving to be "respectable" in one act—as though she could, by any earthly possibility, be anything else!—and for the rest of the evening chafing at the respec-

tability that she has acquired was not exhilarating.

Instead of the ineffable charm of girlhood that has been her strong point she posed as a discontented, gurgling, whining, moaning, misunderstood and disagreeable young person. She rather "riled" us.

The play, moreover, was furnished with an obnoxious crew of decadent types, such as a mother with lax morals, gentlemen who regard the wedding ring as unnecessary and—as a contrast—a set of horrible provincial dullards, who talked by the yard and filled an entire act with their stupidities.

Dear old Mrs. Gilbert appeared in the play, after an illness that had threatened to incapacitate her, and nobly distracted our attention from "The Younger Mrs. Parling" to herself.

It is a pleasure to turn towards the "star" actors, who are at present cheerily engaged in stamping themselves upon the season. These are Robert Hilliard, who has produced a version of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel, known as "In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim," and on the Savoy stage as "That Man and I," and Robert Edeson, who has again intrusted himself to R. H. Davis, in a comedy entitled "Ranson's Folly."

Robert Hilliard takes a holiday occasionally. He "elevates" the stage spasmodically. Apparently he has no worries as to the fate of the stage when he leaves it. He returns to it and evidently discovers that it has managed to drag itself along without him.

We are always rather pleased to welcome him back. He is never great, but generally good. In "That Man and I" he is at his best. In fact, if he can manage to do without a change of occupation for a year or two, the stage will gain by his presence. Hilliard is one of those actors who steadily improve, and, though at one time we might have declared that we couldn't quite "see him" as a star, such a remark to-day would be grossly absurd.

"That Man and I" is what young writers call "gloomy." It deals with a lugubrious subject that is not a good

advertisement for "the joy of living"—whatever that may mean. I wonder if some telepathic inkling of the fact that Mrs. Burnett's novel would be dramatized reached me and impelled me not to read the book?

However that may be, I never read it; and nowadays I avoid popular novels as I would the plague, so certain am I that in some way or other they will be pitchforked upon the stage, and that it will be my fate to acquire them in that shape. In the instance at the Savoy Theater, however, I should not have known that "That Man and I" was a dramatized novel if the program had not acquainted me with that fact.

It is a sad story—a recital of betrayal and misery, all leading up to the dramatic meeting of "that man" and "I," the betrayer and brother of the victim. In spite of which it is a story that is interesting and moving. In an arid season it stands out grim and attractive. Our numbed intelligence is vitalized by something that seems real, even if melancholy.

Better to interest a public in what that public calls "the heart" than to lead it towards the stomach with J. M. Barrie and "Little Mary." In "That Man and I" Mr. Hilliard gave an artistic performance, free from storm or rant. He was easy, self-controlled, with nothing of the *poseur* about his methods. H. Reeves Smith, another most capable actor, lent him excellent "support."

The play suffered from its heroine, Miss Maude Fealy, whose agony was of the stage, stagey. Miss Marion Abbott, however, managed to diffuse a certain amount of feminine interest.

I like young Robert Edeson. He is as good as a tonic. He is new, fresh (and by the word "fresh" please don't imagine I mean anything slangy) and, above all, American. Mr. Edeson is the American actor richly personified. As you watch him you realize that he could belong to no other nationality. English? Never for a second. German? Absurd. French? Oh, la-la! This is an American type, of which we get very few examples.

If you were asked to point out to a

visiting stranger within our gates some breezy instance of an American actor, you would cudgel your brains and feel very much disconcerted.

At first you would think of William Gillette, who is, of course, American, though by no means typically so. Then you might dwell upon Mr. "Nat" Goodwin or "Willie" Collier, who, however, are both comedians, whose Americanisms are merely mirthful. As a good, substantial exponent of serious American characteristics I can think of nobody more illustrative than Robert Edeson.

He is simple, natural, vigorous and sympathetic. He talks like an educated American; he is imitative of nobody; he lacks all self-consciousness, and, withal, he has an artistic appreciation of dramatic effect. In "Ranson's Folly" this is very thoroughly evidenced.

Stories of army life, whatever they may be in book form, are not particularly stimulating behind the footlights. "Ranson's Folly," thanks to Mr. Edeson, however, acquires considerable interest, and the idea of a young man who, as a practical joke, "holds up" a stage-coach, and thereby involves himself in a labyrinth of complications, is diverting enough.

Mr. Richard Harding Davis, nevertheless, is a clumsy playwright. What he evidently thought was a great *coup* in the last act almost demolished "Ranson's Folly" as thoroughly as though it were a house of cards.

One is led to believe throughout this play that the father of the girl whom *Ranson* loves is the real stage-coach villain. This belief is fostered by the untrained Mr. Davis until about three minutes before the final curtain falls.

Just as you are thinking of home and mother, laying aside your opera glass and preparing to step out—out into the night—the whole tenor of your belief is switched away and another villain substituted.

I have always maintained—and shall always continue to maintain—that fooling an audience is the most dangerous, breakneck pastime in which a playwright can indulge. It is suicidal. Fortunately, Mr. Edeson and "Ranson's Folly" had

impressed themselves favorably upon our minds before this inartistic conjurer's trick—this stock in trade of the prestidigitateur—had occurred. Otherwise "Ranson's Folly" would not have been as emphatic as Mr. Davis'!

In this production little Miss Sandol Milliken must be warmly praised. To forget her would be criminal. She was very charming, and her future is a promising one, always provided that she does not attempt to foist herself upon us as a "star" for at least ten years. Even then Miss Milliken won't be dreadfully old. We may be; still, we are prepared to wait!

We were bound to get "The Virginian." It was one of those certainties that routed speculation. I sat down and waited for it as soon as I heard that about seven million copies of Mr. Owen Wister's novel had been sold.

Sad experience has taught me that these colossal sales mean but one mournful thing—and that is the stage. I declined to add a unit to the seven million, for reasons that I have already made clear. I "lay low," with eyes peering into the future, and simply waited. I knew. Alas, I knew!

"The Virginian" came to the Manhattan Theater, thither impelled by Mr. Kirke La Shelle, who, with Wister himself, tapped the shell of the novel and dished the contents upon the stage.

And a fine old omelette it proved to be! Perhaps the seven million people who read the book may possibly have appreciated its staging. The seven-million-and-oneth—to wit, your obedient servant—wondered what it was all about, and had no very rabid curiosity to find out.

In one act the heroic *Virginian* was displayed mixing up babies at "Uncle Hewie's" christening party, noble fellow! It was the uncouth prelude to his heroism. In another act he was revealed making ardent love to a school-marm, who was jealous of a hen named *Emily*. Yet again we saw him leading an expedition into Horse Thief Pass in quest of cattle thieves, only to discover that the friend of his bosom was one of them.

That seemed to be about all. I could only hope that if *Emily* ever laid eggs they were not as addled as the play in which the poor old hen was asked to cackle.

Assuredly this dramatization of "romance" is a disease. It is something that one must cease to inveigh against and merely pity. Perhaps it is a germ, a microbe.

If scientists go on discovering qualities in radium, perchance they may light upon some subtlety that will kill this eerie predilection for staging book covers. For, as a rule, it is only the book covers that are dramatized. The titles are considered valuable. They have been advertised. People know of them. The wonder is that patent medicines are not dramatized. People know of them, too, alas!

An actor rejoicing in, the name of Dustin Farnum was "brought to the front" in "The Virginian," but it would not be charitable to judge him by his unavailing efforts in so cheerless a play. Perhaps in some other atmosphere, away from the cluck-cluck of *Emily, the hen*, Mr. Dustin Farnum may appeal to us. This does not seem to be at all unlikely.

A little "play from the French," called "The Secret of Polichinelle," at the Madison Square Theater, gave us an opportunity to judge Paris in one of its rare periods of morality.

When a French play is "pretty" and "simple" the Parisians generally rave over it, as it is such a contrast to the eternal sex problems that are perpetually set forth in the French metropolis. Of course, there is no reason why we should rave.

Our stage is, at any rate, clean, and, as a general thing, moral. We have pretty and simple plays of our own making (not this season, perhaps). Therefore, while "The Secret of Polichinelle" did not entrance us, or prove to be anything more than picturesque and mildly appealing, we were interested in seeing an unusual brand of the Paris article.

When Paris is virtuous (for a change!) it is always extremely fond of its mother. Dear mother invariably crops up in some form or other. You

always know when a French playwright means to be good. He does not re-vamp his notions of marriage, of infidelity, of divorce, of life in general, but he trots in mamma. "The Secret of Polichinelle" is full of mother—plus father.

A young son has married in defiance of this code: "According to French law, children cannot marry without the consent of their parents before reaching the age of twenty-five years, and the marriage of French subjects under that age in other countries is not recognized as legal in France."

In Pierre Wolff's little play such a marriage has taken place. Mother is greatly distressed at it; the father is beside himself. There is a child, however, and the old couple visit it surreptitiously.

That is the idea, which is rather pretty and ingenious, albeit so excessively un-American, that it is interesting merely as a curiosity.

In "The Secret of Polichinelle" William H. Thompson, a careful and studious actor, marred the rôle of the old French father, which he scarcely seemed to understand. Mr. Thompson has done fine work in his day. Secrets such as those of "Polichinelle" are, however, mysteries to him.

Musically, we have had "The Medal and the Maid," a London affair, that in England was dominated by Miss Ada Reeve, lucklessly absent from the New York cast; "An English Daisy," in which Mr. Charles Bigelow was permitted to air his eccentricities; "My Lady Molly," that was hastily withdrawn, after an ineffective attempt to spear interest by means of the engagement of the delightful little artist, Vesta Tilley, and "Serjeant Kitty," a pretty, innocent and unnecessary little opera, with Miss Virginia Earle as its star.

Musical comedy has played itself out. Nowadays its fate is sealed. It has been thrust down the throats of the public until the cry for mercy has made the welkin ring. The worm has turned at last. What was once light entertainment has degenerated into torture. In spite of all, it is possible to get too much of a good thing.

## FOR BOOK LOVERS

IT is a common experience to hear authors, and publishers, too, complain that the books which receive the most cordial praise from critics are not always those that enjoy the greatest popularity among readers.

Now there is no question that this statement is perfectly true, and no reason why it should cause any surprise.

There are some books, just as there are some people, who have the precious but indefinable gift of making friends. You cannot always tell just why you like them so well. They will not necessarily be the most scholarly or artistic books of their class, any more than the friend with whom you delight to spend an evening is necessarily the most cultured man of your acquaintance.

But one thing is certain, that your favorite friend and your favorite books will have in common the art of making you feel at home, and of leaving you with the determination to come again and stay longer.

What elements go to make up this sort of popularity have unfortunately never been determined. If they had, the task of the novelist would be considerably simplified. Schools of fiction spring up and pass away. The colonial novel, the biblical novel, the rural district novel will have their brief day of success; and out of each of these groups there will come some one, or two, or three books that will be remembered, a "Quo Vadis" or a "David Harum," and the rest will be forgotten.

Perhaps the nearest approach that can be made to generalizing this element of popularity is to say that it depends rather upon the personality of the characters in a story than upon the plot.

How often an eccentric or quaint or lovable character has been the whole sum and substance of a big popular success need not be urged, while the vogue of "Mrs. Wiggs," of "Wee MacGregor," of "Emmy Lou," is still fresh in the memory.

And even in the case of the old familiar novels, the books that are amusing a younger generation to-day as keenly as they did their fathers before them, the thing that we remember longest is not the plot, but one or more of the personalities.

We remember the kindly figure of old Col. Newcomb long after the details of the story have become a mere mental blur. Athos and Porthos and Aramis and D'Artagnan, yes, and their valets, too, are still realities to us, clear brain pictures, one and all, even when their adventures are forgotten—the dash to London, the siege of La Rochelle, the quarrels of king and queen and cardinal.

And secondly, I think that in the long run, the fiction that stands the best chance of wearing well is the fiction of our own country, the fiction that mirrors back to us the conditions that form a part of our own life.

For a long time—I should say well into the latter quarter of the nineteenth century—we were still largely under the influence of the English school. The prevailing type of the novel in America as well as in England was the novel of manners, the novel that depicted the social life of cultured men and women.

Now this sort of novel, which largely ignores the material, work-a-day problems of life, thrives readily in England, where society is chiefly composed



of a leisure class. But when our writers tried to treat American life in similar fashion, they had to resort to all sorts of devices to get a hero whose freedom from business cares would leave him available for the heroine's use during the active hours of the day.

A table of statistics compiled from all our fiction down, let us say, to 1880, would, I think, show some amusing figures.

It would reveal an overwhelming majority of idle young men with independent fortunes; artists and authors would come next in order of frequency; and after them, physicians and clergymen, since they could be found at home a large part of the day.

Business men were sadly in the minority, and usually disappeared from the pages of the book as soon as they donned hat and coat and shut the front door behind them in the morning.

Even when a writer of Mr. Howells' rank sat down to study a distinct business type, like Silas Lapham, it is plain that his interest in him was not on the business but the social side—the problem of how he would adapt himself to an environment for which he was not fitted.

Now the great majority of the readers of to-day are business men and the wives and daughters of business men; and that is why a school of fiction which reflects the active side of American life is bound to achieve success.

Such a school has gradually grown up within the last ten years. At the beginning it was overshadowed, almost stifled, by the transient vogue of the novel of adventure, but it has held its own, thanks to Frank Norris and Stewart White, and a score of younger writers with similar ideals and aspirations.

The *Strenuous Life Novel* is the phrase one is tempted to coin for it, so large a part is played by the commercial and financial activities of the country. Gradually it has covered all the various sides of our national life; the wheat and cattle ranches, the lumber district, the mill and factory, the board of trade and the stock market. In short,

it is the beginning of a new and healthy American realism.

In all the novels of the past twelve months, I could scarcely hit upon an apter illustration of this new American realism than in Herbert M. Hopkins' latest story, "The Torch" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company).

University life is no novelty in fiction, but hitherto it has been pictured from the undergraduate standpoint and frankly localized at some one of our bigger seats of learning.

One of the best attempts of the kind ever made, Charles Flandrau's "Harvard Episodes," was intensely local; and so, too, was Owen Wister's inimitable little satire, "Philosophy Four."

I question whether anyone who has not spent the better part of four years under the shadow of Memorial Hall is in a position to say just how keen a criticism of life is hidden under the blithe and irresponsible mood of this little gem of pure comedy.

It has ceased to surprise me when readers, who have utterly misunderstood its spirit, avow that they find "Philosophy Four" "insufferably priggish."

But with books of this type, the best and the worst, Prof. Hopkins' story has nothing in common. He has recognized, first of all, that the modern American university is a miniature world, in which the student is thrown on his own resources, and must find his own level, just as in later life he must find it in the world at large.

The distinctive quality of "The Torch" is, that it gives, for the first time, a picture of university life as a whole, drawn with bold, sweeping strokes, suggestive of a certain epic bigness.

It is not written from the standpoint of the student, or the faculty, or the board of trustees. It is not limited to the lecture room or the campus, or the mild social functions at the professors' houses. It includes all these things, and a great many more besides, all fitting in together, as so many integral parts of a complex whole.

I am not prepared to say that the broad, panoramic, Zolaesque school of fiction is in itself necessarily superior

to other methods. But when an author starts out to use it, I do like to see him show an ability to handle mankind in the mass, to give you the effect of jostling crowds of men and women, the blending sounds of countless voices.

And this is just what Prof. Hopkins has done admirably well. He has given us a series of kaleidoscopic pictures, full of life and movement—the bustle and confusion of the autumn reopening of the university, when classroom and dormitory awaken to new life; the pageantry attending the inaugural ceremony that ushers in a new president; and most memorable of all, the remarkable word-picture of a ball game, which stands alone as a sheer *tour de force*, an embodiment on paper of the vociferous excitement of healthy youth; the pandemonium of waving handkerchiefs and parasols, wild confusion and deafening cheers, that attend a big collegiate victory.

But while he is painting the university as a little social cosmos, Prof. Hopkins has no intention to let us forget that it is also a big business venture, like a railroad or bank, or any other large and influential corporation—and quite as apt to suffer from bad business methods.

The central story of "The Torch" is a frank study of the harm which may be done to a college by a self-seeking and incompetent president. How much of this story was suggested by the actual happenings at a prominent Western university, quite recently, is a question that has already given rise to a good deal of acrimonious discussion, and to a qualified denial on the part of the author.

But it is a question which has no serious bearing upon the artistic quality of the book. The condition of internal discord, described in "The Torch," is one of quite general application. It would be the fate of any institution so unfortunate as to be afflicted with a Babbington.

The name of Babbington is one which might well be kept, as so many of Dickens' names have been, to enrich our current vocabulary. We all have

known the type that he stands for—plausible, smooth of speech and manner, always ready with a fund of well-rounded platitudes, that are equally impressive to his hearers and to the readers of his reported speeches.

He is an essentially modern type of high-class charlatan, ready to lower any standard, sacrifice any tradition, welcome any innovation, that means a pecuniary gain to the university, simply because he thinks that the material advancement of the university is synonymous with the greater glory of Babbington.

Mr. Howells has been quoted, in a recent interview, as saying that in any general discussion of the tendencies and achievements of modern fiction, the sex of the writers may be safely disregarded. And if quality, not quantity, is the criterion, statistics will probably bear him out.

Certainly, there has been no stronger story this season, or one more distinctly modern in method, than one that has come from a woman, "The Deliverance," by Ellen Glasgow (Doubleday, Page & Company.)

It is possible that a man, in handling the same theme, would have generalized more fearlessly, and so have come nearer to producing a comprehensive picture of the South, throughout the Reconstruction Period. But in doing so he would surely have sacrificed something of the strength which Miss Glasgow has concentrated upon her central figures, at the expense of her background—upon the individual human story, rather than the history of an epoch.

I know of no recent book in English that sets forth with such vivid and dramatic art the contrast between what is and what might have been.

Briefly, it is the story of an old Virginia family, the Blakes, one of the many families impoverished by the war. The father is dead, the mother a helpless cripple, the property slipping away little by little, into the possession of an unscrupulous steward, until all that remains is a wretched cabin, in the midst of a few acres of swamp land.

Here the younger generation grows up, robbed not only of property, but of the social prestige, the education and refinement that were their birthright. Something of the courtly air of his father belongs to young Blake, for that is a matter of race.

But the superiority that comes from wealth and culture all belongs to the granddaughter of the former overseer. And because young Blake hates this man, who lives in the house and tills the acres that ought by rights to have been his own, he tries to include the granddaughter in his hatred.

But he tries in vain. In spite of the obstacles between them, the two are designed by nature for each other; and the problem of the book is not so much how he can forget hatred in love as it is how she can later forgive the grim vengeance which he has taken upon those who are near and dear to her.

But the figure of all others in the book whom the reader will longest remember is not young Blake nor the girl he loves, nor the implacable old grandfather. It is Blake's mother, blind and paralyzed, a figure of unconscious tragedy.

She has never been told of the downfall of the South, the emancipation of the slaves, the changed fortunes of her own family. Sightless and motionless, she sits all day in her wretched cabin, still believing herself back in the old family mansion, the mistress of an army of slaves, a citizen of a free and powerful Confederacy.

For twenty years, her peace of mind has rested upon a tissue of ingenious lies, woven hourly around the chair she sits in—a whole national history fabricated with pious care, to save her from a blow which, when it does fall, falls with crushing force.

When a man who habitually reads a great deal finds himself instinctively reverting to a particular book for a second or third reading, he can feel pretty safe in giving it a cordial indorsement.

I used to find myself reverting in this fashion to the earlier books of Edith Wharton and of Mrs. Henry Dudeney—not their later ones—and lately I

have been reverting in somewhat the same way to "The Forerunner" (Fox, Duffield & Company).

It is written by Neith Boyce, who in private life is Mrs. Hutchins Hapgood; and as a first book by a new writer it shows an unusual amount of promise.

Briefly stated, the plot is a study of incompatibility. It is the intimate history of one of those marriages that are none too rare, where the young couple begin apparently with abundant prospect of happiness.

And then, little by little it leaks out that things have all gone wrong, and the two have drifted apart, just how or why the outside world never knows.

Dan Devin is a well-drawn character, and one showing a subtle understanding of the masculine temperament, such as we seldom get from a woman. He is a New Englander by descent and a Californian by adoption; and underneath a thick veneer of Western hustle, he has preserved something of a remote Irish ancestry, a happy-go-lucky belief in his ultimate destiny.

It is characteristic of him, having had an unprecedented success in a real estate speculation, to regard his winnings, not as capital, but as part of his annual income, to be spent with the freedom of water.

It is on the strength of this windfall that he marries Anna Quartermain, instead of waiting sensibly until his business was on a firm foundation. It is also on the strength of his first success that Dan launches out into a series of speculations that leave him bankrupt at the end of another year.

Anna is also a clearly marked type, one of the many women who accept marriage without enthusiasm and without revolt. So long as Dan can give her the things she craves, pretty clothes and a social standing and the means to entertain lavishly, just so long she will go on believing quite honestly that she loves him.

But when the crash comes, and Dan has to accept temporary work elsewhere, leaving her behind him in Los Angeles; when months go by, and one after another of Dan's schemes for

speedy wealth come to nothing; and her clothes get threadbare, and the unpaid bills mount up, and she grows tired of her loneliness and still more tired of following him from pillar to post, and being deserted again at a moment's notice—all this while she has been slowly waking up to the fact that she does not love him.

And one day, after they have drifted to New York, her pent-up bitterness bursts out, and she tells him the truth, brutally. They agree to separate, and the last evening that they are ever to spend together they dine at an obscure little French restaurant. And curiously enough, it is the memory of this dinner that lingers longer than any other episode in the book.

You can't forget them as you see them there, husband and wife for so many months, and yet so obviously and hopelessly ill-assorted.

There is a grotesque pathos in Dan's dumb misery that finds vent in grumbling at food and service; in the French waiter's bewilderment at such unusual lack of appreciation; and perhaps most of all in Anna's angry resentment at her husband for thus making himself and her conspicuous.

The book is carried to a logical outcome. Yet it might just as well have stopped right there. Nothing more was needed to show their fundamental unfitness for each other.

"Judith of the Plains," by Marie Manning (Harper & Brothers), is a story of considerable, even if somewhat uneven, strength. Like Gwendolin Overton's earliest success, it is a study of a half-breed Indian girl, and of the effect which education has upon the mental and moral development of such a complex nature.

The breath of the plains seems to blow through this book, and here and there it has episodes which are as unmistakably the real thing, as anything in "The Virginian." There is a grim power about the scene of the lynching, where a horse-thief, Judith's brother, is taken at night from wife and child, and dragged away to be hanged to the nearest tree; and even stronger is the scene

of the ensuing night where Judith, determined at any cost to conceal the shameful truth, insists upon dancing, at the Benton Ranch ball, with the ring-leader of her brother's murderers.

Yet it is safe to predict that even more readers will be won by a purely extraneous episode than by the main thread of the story. This is the episode of the little New England school teacher who, after being lured by a violet-scented note, all the way out to Wyoming, to become governess to the children of a certain Mrs. Yellert, discovers when too late, that the children in question are all of them grown men, who cannot even read or write, that the schoolroom is the open prairie, without so much as an empty box to sit upon, and that Mrs. Yellert herself is a gaunt Amazon, more formidable even than her sons.

"Do you sleep light or dark?" inquires Mrs. Yellert, when nightfall comes; and the little governess chooses "dark" at random, "with the happy result that her bed was made up to leeward of the great sheepwagon, in a nice little corner of the State of Wyoming."

English history, both legendary and authentic, has served as background for several stories of conspicuous merit recently. The earliest of these, in point of time, is "Uther and Igraine," by Warwick Deeping (Outlook Publishing Company).

When the book first appeared in England, critics were quick to note the debt its author owed to Maurice Hewlett, admitting at the same time that he was not without a fair and promising share of originality.

To me the book seemed not only the nearest approach which any subsequent author has made to the special manner of "The Forest Lovers," but in one way at least, an advance upon it. There is a full-blooded, virile note about it, such as we do not meet with in Hewlett prior to the advent of "Richard-Yea-and-Nay."

Yet the art of both these writers has this in common—that they both set us thinking of rare embroideries, of tapestries and quaint old pictured hangings.